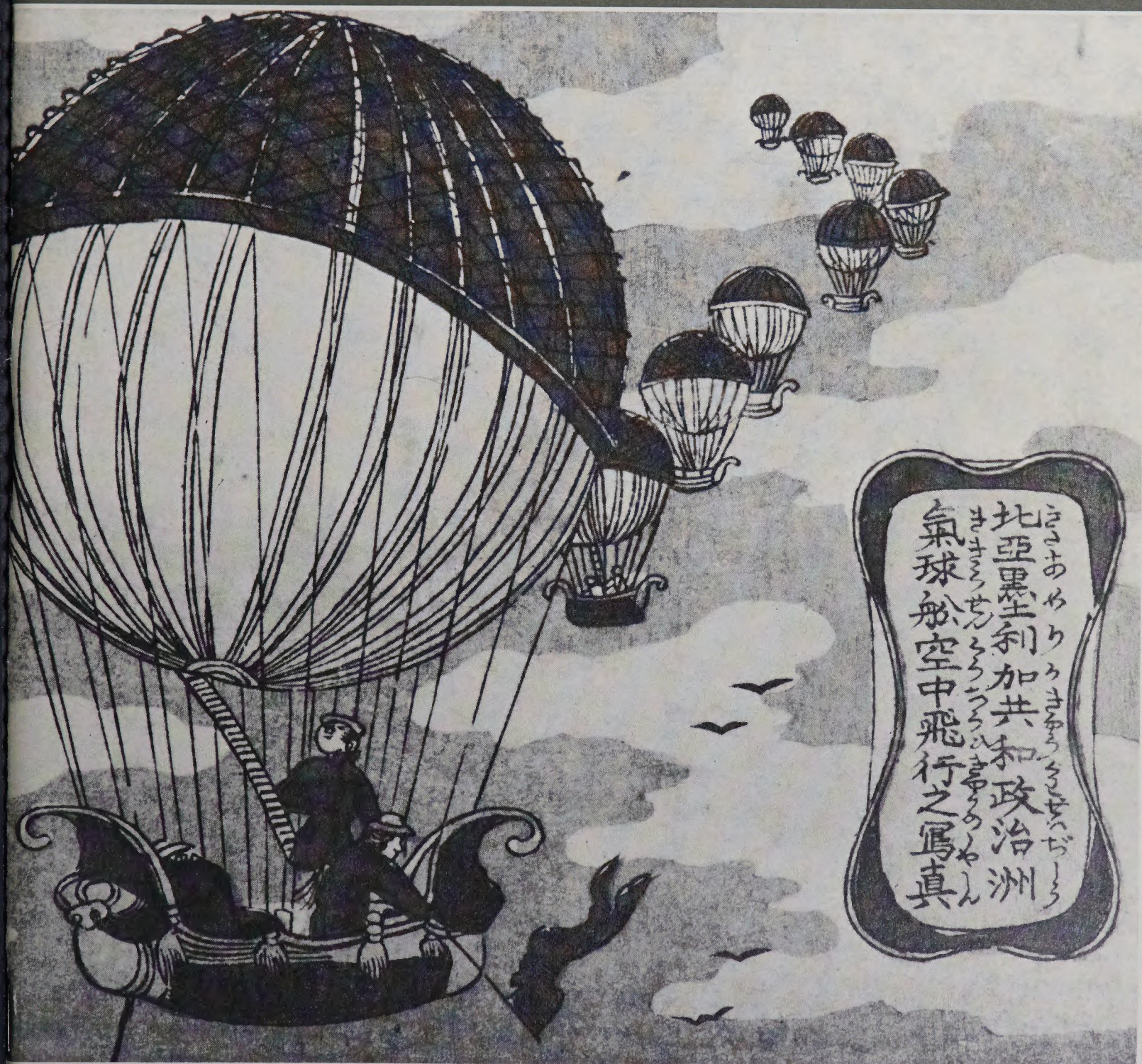


East Meets West





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Detail of an illuminated painting from fifteenth-century France symbolizing a meeting of East and West.

In a now famous book, philosopher and historian F. S. C. Northrop has described Asia's and Europe's discovery of one another as *The Meeting of East and West*, yet the real nature of this contact might best be described as a collision between East and West. Traditional European and Asian values clashed and the impact of the economic and political confrontations of the 1800's are still felt; but most significant was the collision of preconceptions with which Europeans and Asians viewed each other. Westerners, with their rational philosophies and scientific inclinations, considered themselves superior to the peoples of Asia, whose economies were agrarian but whose interests were humanitarian and aesthetic. In turn, the Chinese, looking out on the world from their "Middle Kingdom" (name reflecting the traditional belief that China was in the center of the universe), saw all foreigners as "barbarians."

Obviously it is of vital importance in our contemporary world that we obtain a greater understanding of Asian cultures, societies, and attitudes. Asians too have to overcome hundreds of years of preconceptions about the West if there is to be a meeting of the two great civilizations. Europeans and Americans tend to see in China and Japan what they want to see. The comments on Asia by Carpini, Marco Polo, St. Francis Xavier, Peter Mundy, Leibniz, and others, tell more about the

observer than the observed. If we are to understand the history of the relationships between East and West we must first understand the nature of European and American conceptions of Asia as well as the Asian view of us.

This study reveals something not only about Asians and Westerners of the past but also something about Americans today. What happens when one great nation intrudes upon another, long isolated from the greater part of the world? What occurs when two widely differing cultures meet forcibly? What was the European reaction to the "discovery" of China and Japan? How did the Chinese and Japanese react when they found that the "barbarians" not only possessed an advanced, technologically sophisticated culture but were also capable of defeating them on their own land? Part of each answer may be found in the recollections of Western adventurers and travelers who first encountered the world of the East. Another part of these answers lies in the Chinese and Japanese conceptions of the West. But the most essential aspect of the study deals with the ways in which we form preconceptions of other peoples. In this manner we can examine the process of two cultures undergoing not only conflict but also accommodation, and develop an understanding of the diverse ideas which tend to separate Americans and Asians as well as of those forces which create affinities.

The People of Kytay

When did the first European visit China? We may never learn the precise answer to this question, but we do know that as early as the first century A.D. Roman merchants frequently visited the ancient states of Jih-nan and Chiao-chih (present-day North Vietnam) and Cambodia. The first Roman envoy arrived at the Han court in A.D. 166, and a Roman merchant, referred to by the Chinese as Ch'in Lun, traveled by sea to South China in 226.

The destruction of the West Roman Empire brought an end to contacts between Europe and China for over a thousand years. A lively maritime trade developed between Persia, Arabia, and China beginning in the 600's, but trade between China and Europe, if indeed there was any, cannot be established as a fact until the 1200's, when China was unified with its northern borderlands by Kublai Khan. The new empire, extending from the Ukraine in the West to China in the East, made contacts between Western Europe and Eastern Asia possible. In 1245 the Pope sent the 65-year-old Italian Franciscan monk John de Plano Carpini on a mission to the Mongol court to demand that the Khan cease his attacks against the Christian nations. Suffering terrible hardships on the way, Carpini, ignorant of the countries, languages, and peoples he encountered, arrived in Mongolia in 1246, where he spent more than three months. The monk's brief descriptions of China, from which this reading is taken, was the first trustworthy account of Cathay to reach Europe. However the text contains one error. Carpini mentions that the Chinese had the Old and New Testament. The Chinese could not have had such texts at the time. These were probably Buddhist scriptures. The old text is followed by a modernized version.

† C. Raymond Beazley, *The Texts and Versions of John de Plano Carpini and William de Rubruquis* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1903).

the men of kytay are pagans, hauing a speciall kinde of writing by themselues, and (as it is reported) the scriptures of the olde and newe testament. they haue also recorded in hystories the liues of their forefathers: and they haue eremites, and certaine houses made after the manner of our churches, which in those dayes they greatly resorted vnto. they say that they haue diuers saints also, and they worship one god. they adore and reuerence christ iesvs our lorde, and beleue the article of eternall life, but are not baptized. they doe also honourably esteeme and reuerence our scriptures. they loue christians, and bestowe much almes, and are a very courteous and gentle people. they haue no beardes, and they agree partly with the mongals in the disposition of their countenance. in all occupations which men practise, there are not better artificers in the whole worlde. their countrey is exceeding rich, in corne, wine, golde, silke, and other commodities.

The men of Kytay¹ are pagans, having a special kind of writing by themselves, and (as it is reported) the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. They have also recorded in histories the lives of their forefathers: and they have hermits, and certain houses made after the manner of our churches, which in those days they greatly resorted unto. They say that they have diverse saints also, and they worship one God. They adore and reverence Christ Jesus our Lord, and believe the article of eternal life, but are not baptized. They do also honorably esteem and revere our Scriptures. They love Christians, and bestow much alms, and are a very courteous and gentle people. They have no beards, and they agree partly with the Mongols in the disposition of their countenance. In all occupations which men practice, there are not better artificers² in the whole world. Their country is exceedingly rich, in corn, wine, gold, silk, and other commodities.

1. Kytay, or Cathay, are archaic names for China.

2. Artisans.

The Description of the World

A short time after Carpini's visit the Khan received another Italian mission, three members of the Venetian merchant family of Polo. Nicolo and his brother Maffeo had already been to the court of the Mongol Khan for reasons of trade, but in 1271 they left Italy again, this time taking with them Nicolo's seventeen-year-old son Marco. The group crossed the Mediterranean, traveled through Central Asia and Inner Mongolia, before reaching in 1275 Kublai's summer capital north of present-day Peking.

Marco is said to have learned many languages including Chinese, and was often sent as his father's ambassador to cities throughout the Chinese Empire. The young Polo's observations and experiences have been recorded in an account of his travels entitled *The Description of the World*, in which he describes China and the Mongol Empire at the height of its greatness, when it was unrivaled in its cultural attainments, splendor, sophistication, and power. Traveling on, the Polos landed in Japan and later India on their way back. In the following extracts Marco Polo describes the Chinese city of Hangchow, or "Quinsai" as he called it, and his brief stop in Japan, "Cipingu," relating some of the impressions China and Japan made on the minds of medieval Europeans.

When one sets out from the city of Ciangan he goes riding three days journeys through very beautiful country where there are found many dwellings and cities and many villages of great importance and of great wealth and of great activity, where they live by trade and by crafts. They are idol-

aters and are subject to the rule of the great Kaan. They have money of notes. They have abundance of all victuals for man's body. And when one is gone riding these three days journeys then one finds the very most noble and magnificent city which for its excellence, importance, and

† A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, trans., *Marco Polo: The Description of the World* (London: Routledge and Paul Kegan Ltd., 1938).

beauty is called Quinsai, which means to say in French the city of Heaven, just as I told you before, for it is the greatest city which may be found in the world, where so many pleasures may be found that one fancies himself to be in Paradise.

Master Marc Pol was in this city many times and determined with great diligence to notice and understand all the conditions of the place, describing them in his notes, as will be briefly here said below. It was contained in that writing first of all that the city of Quinsai is so large that in circuit it is in the common belief a hundred miles round or thereabout, because the streets and canals in it are very wide and large. Then there are squares where they hold market, which on account of the vast multitudes which meet in them are necessarily very large and spacious. And it is placed in this way, that it has on one side a lake of fresh water which is very clear, and on the other there is an enormous river which, entering by many great and small canals which run in every part of the city, both takes away all impurities and then enters the said lake, and from that runs to the Ocean. And this makes the air very wholesome; and one can go all about the city by land and by these streams. And the streets and canals are wide and great so that boats are able to travel there conveniently and carts to carry the things necessary for the inhabitants. And there is a story that it has 12000 bridges, between great and small, for the greater part of stone—for some are built of wood. And for each of these bridges, or for the greater part, a great and large ship could easily pass under the arch of it; and for the others smaller ships could pass. And let no one be surprised if there are so many

bridges, because I tell you that this town is all situated in water of lagoons as Venice is.

There are ten principal open spaces, beside infinite others for the districts, which are square, that is half a mile for a side. And along the front of those there is a main street forty paces wide, which runs straight from one end of the city to the other with many bridges which cross it level and conveniently; and every four miles is found one of these squares such as have two miles (as has been said) of circuit. And on each of the said squares three days a week there is a concourse of from forty to fifty thousand persons who come to market and bring everything you can desire for food, because there is always a great supply of victuals; of game, that is to say of roebuck, red-deer, fallow-deer, hares, rabbits, and of birds, partridges, pheasants, francolins, quails, fowls, capons, and so many ducks and geese that more could not be told; for they rear so many of them in that lake that for one Venetian silver groat may be had a pair of geese and two pair of ducks. There are always on the said squares all sorts of vegetables and fruits, and above all the rest immense pears, which weigh ten pounds a piece, which are white inside like a paste, and very fragrant; peaches in their seasons, yellow and white, very delicate. Grapes nor wine do not grow there, but very good dried ones are brought from elsewhere, and likewise wine, of which the inhabitants do not make too much count, being used to that of rice and spices. Then there comes every day, brought from the Ocean sea up the river for the space of twenty-five miles, great quantity of fish; and there is also a supply of that from the lake (for there are always fishermen who do nothing

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Routledge and Paul

else), which is of different sorts according to the seasons of the year, and because of the impurities which come from the city it is fat and savoury. All the said ten squares are surrounded by high houses, and underneath are shops where they work at all sorts of trades, and sell all sorts of merchandise, and spicery, jewels, pearls; and in some shops nothing else is sold but wine made of rice with spices, for they continually go making it fresh and fresh, and it is cheap. There are so many merchants and so rich, who do so much and so great trade, that there is not a man who could say or tell the truth about them that should be believed, they are so extraordinary a thing. And again I tell you that all the great men and their wives and also all the heads or great masters of the stations of the trades of which I have told you do nothing at all with their hands, but all live as delicately and as cleanly as if they were kings and barons. And their ladies and wives are also very delicate and angelic things, as has been said, and tenderly and very delicately reared, and dress with so many ornaments of silk and of jewels that the value of them could not be estimated. They have their houses very well built and richly worked, and they take so great delight in ornaments, paintings, and buildings, that the sums they spend on them are a stupendous thing. The native inhabitants of the city of Quinsai are peaceful people through having been so brought up and habituated by their kings, who were of the same nature. They do not handle arms nor keep them at home. They do their merchandise and arts with great sincerity and truth. They love one another so that a district may be reckoned as one

family on account of the friendliness which exists between the men. They are equally friendly with the foreigners who come to them for the sake of trade, and gladly receive them at home, saluting them, and give them every help and advice in the business which they do. And again I tell you that towards midday from the city, that is to say inside the city, is a lake very beautiful and great which is quite thirty miles round, and all round this lake are built many very beautiful and great palaces and many beautiful houses so wonderfully made that they could not be better devised nor made, nor more richly, which belong to gentle men and to great of the city, and they are marvellously adorned inside and outside. And again there were many abbeys in that place round the lake and many monasteries of idols, which are in the very greatest numbers, where stay a large number of monks who serve them. And the men as well as the women are fair and handsome and always dress for the most part in silk, because of the great abundance which they have of that material which is produced in the whole territory of Quinsai, besides the great quantity which is continually brought in from other provinces by merchants. And they eat all flesh both of horses, dogs, and of all other brute beasts and other animals in general which for nothing in the world would any Christian here eat. And again I tell you that in this town of Quinsai are quite three thousand artificial baths, which spring from the ground, these are stoves, where the men and the women bathe and take them great delight and go there several times a month; for they live very cleanly in their bodies. Moreover I tell you that they are the most beautiful

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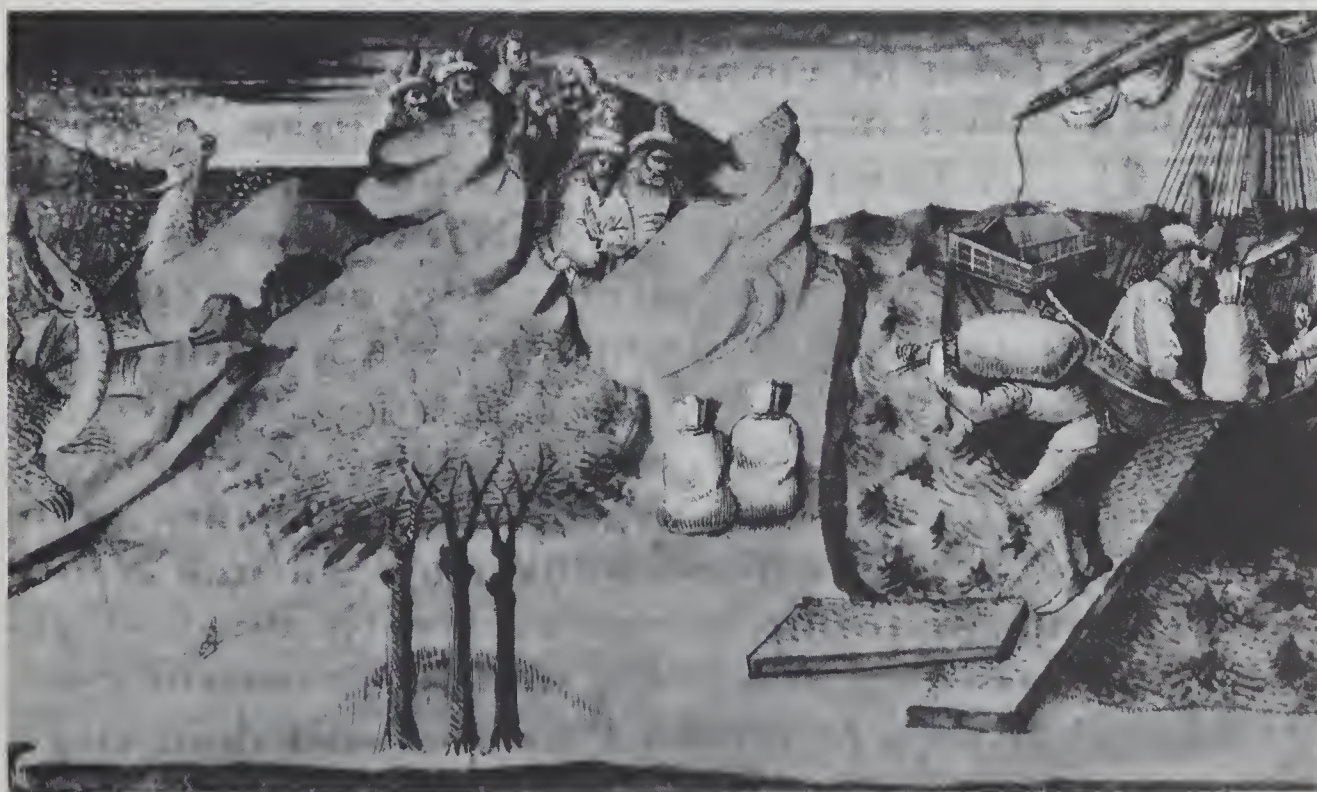


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baths and the best and the largest that are in the world. For I tell you that they are so large that more than a hundred men or a hundred women can well bathe themselves there at one time. And in this city of Quinsai again is the royal palace of the king which is the most beautiful and the most noble palace that is to be found in the world. And I will tell you something of it. Now you may know that the palace has a circuit of quite ten miles of land round and it is square and is walled with high and thick walls, all with battlements. And inside the walls at the back are many very beautiful gardens with all the good fruits which man would know how to describe, the most beautiful and delectable gardens in the world. There are many beautiful fountains and several lakes where there are found many good fishes. And in the middle of the inner space of this wall is

the palace very vast and beautiful, the largest that is in the world. It is a very beautiful sight to see. Moreover I tell you that this palace has quite a thousand rooms, these are houses fair and great, both for sleeping and for eating; and the nature of this palace is something wonderful. And you may know that a great river which is quite a mile wide goes through the middle of this city, upon the banks of which on one side and on the other are very beautiful buildings. And in this city are made many ships which sail on that river with merchandise, and especially of sugar. Great trade in pearls and in other precious stones and spices is done there, and this is because the ships from Indie come there in numbers with much merchandise and with many merchants who frequent the islands of Indie.

Now since we have told you of so many



This detail of The Land of Seres (China) is a French illuminated painting from the fifteenth century.

provinces, kingdoms, and countries of the firm land as you have heard above, then we shall leave all that matter and shall begin to enter into Indie to tell all the wonderful things which are there. First of all I wish to tell you of many Indian islands which are in this Ocean sea where we are now. And these islands are to the sunrising from the regions of which we have told before, and we will begin you first with an island which is called Cipingu.

Cipingu is an island to the sunrising which is on the high sea 1500 miles distant from the land of Mangi. It is a very exceedingly great island. The people of it are white, fair fashioned, and beautiful, and of good manners. They are idolaters and keep themselves by themselves, that is they are ruled by their own king, but pay

tribute to no other, and have no lordship of any other men but of themselves. Moreover I tell you that they have gold in very great abundance, because gold is found there beyond measure. Moreover I tell you that no man takes gold out from that island, because the king does not easily allow it to be taken from the island and therefore no merchant as it were nor other man goes there from the mainland, because it is so far, and ships are rarely brought there from other regions, for it abounds in all things; and therefore I tell you that they have so much gold that it is a wonderful thing, as I have told you, so that they do not know what to do with it. They have also many other precious stones enough there. And for this cause it is an island so rich that none could any way tell the riches of it.



This famous world map, executed in 1482, was printed from woodcuts and colored by hand.

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† Michael Cooper,
(Berkeley: Univers

"The Best Race Yet Discovered"

The opulent "Çipingu" encountered by Marco Polo on his way from China to India and noted in *The Description of the World* attracted the interests of later explorers such as Columbus and Magellan, but the first "opening" of Japan was actually an accident. In 1543, three Portuguese seamen were driven by high winds onto the Japanese shore and, subsequently, increasing numbers of merchants and missionaries made the voyage to the newly found islands. Most of what Europeans knew of Japan was learned through personal letters, reports, and business records of merchants and Jesuits who made their way to the island empire during the so-called Christian Century of Japan, between the 1500's and 1600's. This reading brings together comments by Europeans who visited Japan during this century, reflecting the sensitivity and frank amazement of the observers.

The Name

But the best known name, and at present the ordinary and current one, was given to the country by the kings of China during the T'ang dynasty about a thousand years ago. They called the country *Nihon* or *Nippon*, or in common Japanese *Hi-no-moto*, meaning the beginning or origin of the sun, for *ni* or *nichi* means sun and *hon* means origin. This is because it is the furthest country in the explored Orient, and they believed that the sun is born there and that the kingdom is the end of the eastern

part of the world. The name certainly fits these islands for they are the furthest easterly lands known and form the limit of the Orient. Furthermore, as far as India and Europe are concerned, Japan is the true Orient where the sun rises before reaching the western countries. This name of *Nihon* or *Nippon* is pronounced by the Chinese in their language as *Jih-pun*, or, in the vulgar tongue of Fukien and Kwantung, as *Japuen*, whence the Portuguese, corrupting the name as they so often do with words and proper names of the Orient, obtained the name *Japão*.

† Michael Cooper, S.J., ed., *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).

Their Appearance

The Japanese are white, although not excessively pale as the northern nations but just moderately so. They have goodly, somewhat round features, and as regards facial appearance they look like the genuine Chinese of the interior. Thus they greatly wonder at big and long noses, thick beards and red or fair hair, and consider all these things as so many defects. And so it comes about that they do not think very highly of beards, and if a man has a thick one he pulls it out, although in ancient times they were accustomed to letting them grow naturally.

Moderately Pretty

The women are moderately pretty, with a rather pale complexion, and they all have very small eyes, which are regarded as being more beautiful than large ones. Their teeth are artificially blackened with a sort of varnish, the colour of ink, which gives their mouths a most extraordinary appearance of cavernous darkness. Men of noble birth similarly discolour their teeth when they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen years, the women doing so at the time of marriage, when they also dye their hair black, this colour being regarded as much more beautiful than fair hair.

Warlike

The Japanese are much braver and more warlike than the people of China, Korea, Ternate and all the other nations around the Philippines.

Fear of Death

There is no nation in the world which fears death less.

Harakiri

And if a man declares that he wishes to kill himself, he summons one of his friends or servants and asks him to strike off his head after he has wounded himself. He then draws out his dagger and cuts his belly from side to side. The braver type make the cut in the form of a cross and demonstrate their courage by pretending not to feel any pain. The moment the entrails gush out through the wound, the friend so deputed cuts off his head. Those who die in this fashion are regarded as very honourable and valiant men. Many of their servants will sometimes follow their example, cutting their bellies together with their masters to show their love and loyalty towards him. To cut the belly in this way is so common in Japan that it sometimes happens that very small children do it in front of their parents when they are angry with them.

The Best Race

Judging by the people we have so far met, I would say that the Japanese are the best race yet discovered and I do not think you will find their match among the pagan nations. They are very sociable, usually good and not malicious, and much concerned with their honour, which they prize above everything else. For the most part they are poor but they do not despise the

poverty of nobles and common folk. They have one characteristic which is not to be found in any part of Christendom: however poor a noble may be (and however much wealth a commoner may possess), they pay him as much honour as if he were rich. A poor noble will never marry a commoner, no matter how much money he may be offered; this is because they prefer honour to wealth and consider that they lose their honour if they marry a commoner. The people show much politeness to each other. They prize their weapons and place much reliance on them; both nobles and commoners carry a sword and dagger from the age of fourteen. They will not suffer any affront or contemptuous speech. The people hold the gentry in great respect, and in their turn the nobles are proud to serve their lord, obeying his least command. And this, I fancy, is not due to any fear of punishment which the lord might inflict for disobedience, but rather on account of the loss of honour that they would suffer if they were to do otherwise.

The Children

Children are carefully and tenderly brought up; their Parents strike them seldom or never, and though they cry whole nights together, endeavour to still them with patience; judging that Infants have no understanding, but that it grows with them as they grow in years, and therefore to be encouraged with indulgences and examples. It is remarkable to see how orderly and how modestly little Children of seven or eight years old behave themselves; their discourse and answers savour-

ing of riper age, and far surpassing any I have yet seen of their times in our Country.

Strictness of the Law

A Japanese fellow stole eight *reales* from one of my ship's crew, and without considering the consequences the sailor went to complain to the magistrate of the street, for each street has its official. He listened to the sailor, verified the theft, and, the case being proved, in little over three hours he condemned the Japanese to death. I went to the magistrate's house, and he and everybody else in the country treated me with great respect for they knew that the Emperor had paid me much honour and favour. I told him briefly why I had come and he began to wring his hands and look very upset. He explained that the laws and regulations were so strict that even if the Emperor's eldest son had come to make the same request he would not be able to comply. The law of the land laid down that a thief who stole anything to the value of five *reales* was to die and the magistrates themselves were under pain of death to see that the sentence was carried out.

Elegant and Copious

They have but one language and it is the best, the most elegant and the most copious tongue in the known world; it is more abundant than Latin and expresses concepts better. As well as possessing a great variety of synonyms, it also has a kind of natural elegance and dignity; and so you may not use the same nouns and verbs when talking with different people and

about diverse topics, but you must employ polite or common words, honorific or depreciative phrases in accordance with the rank of the person and the subject of the conversation. The written and spoken languages are very different, and men and women also differ in their way of speaking. There is no less diversity in their way of writing; they write their letters, for example, in one style but their books in another. Finally, it takes a long time to learn the language because it is so elegant and copious. To speak or write in a way other than their accustomed manner is impolite and invites ridicule, just as if we were to speak Latin backwards and with many solecisms.

Head to Foot

I am sending you a copy of the Japanese alphabet. Their way of writing is very different from ours because they write from the top of the page down to the bottom. I asked Paul why they did not write in our way and he asked me why we did not write in their way? He explained that as the head of a man is at the top and his feet are at the bottom, so too a man should write from top to bottom.

Cleanliness and Solemnity

Their clothes and food are so peculiar that it is impossible to describe them adequately, for although their way of dressing is very neat and clean, in no way does it resemble ours. Even less can one imagine what their food and drink is like and how it is served, for they observe much cleanli-

ness and solemnity at table and are quite unlike us. Each person has his own table, but there are no tablecloths, napkins, knives, forks or spoons. All they have are two small sticks, called *hashi*, which they manipulate with such cleanliness and skill that they do not touch any of the food with their hands nor let even a crumb fall from their plate on to the table. They eat with such modesty and good manners that they observe just as many rules at table as they do in other things. In addition to rice-wine (which they like very much, although we find it disagreeable), they always drink hot water at the end of every meal, both in summer and winter; the water is so hot, in fact, that it can only be drunk in sips. Their victuals and ways of cooking them are such that they are quite unlike European food, both in substance and taste. Until a man accustoms himself to their food, he is bound to experience much hardship and difficulty.

Unlike Any Other People

They also have rites and ceremonies so different from those of all the other nations that it seems they deliberately try to be unlike any other people. The things which they do in this respect are beyond imagining and it may truly be said that Japan is a world the reverse of Europe; everything is so different and opposite that they are like us in practically nothing. So great is the difference in their food, clothing, honours, ceremonies, language, management of the household, in their way of negotiating, sitting, building, curing the wounded and sick, teaching and bringing up children, and in everything else, that it

can be neither described nor understood.

Now all this would not be surprising if they were like so many barbarians, but what astonishes me is that they behave as very prudent and cultured people in all these matters. To see how everything is the reverse of Europe, despite the fact that their ceremonies and customs are so cultured and founded on reason, causes no little surprise to anyone who understands such things. What is even more astonishing is that they are so different from us, and even contrary to us, as regards the senses and natural things; this is something which I would not dare to affirm if I had not had so much experience among them. Thus their taste is so different from ours that they generally despise and dislike the thing that we find most pleasing; on the other hand, we cannot stand the things which they like.

Public Baths

Europeans take a bath privately in their houses; in Japan, men, women and bonzes [Buddhist monks] wash in public baths or at night in the porches of their houses.

Plays

Our theatrical plays are often changed and new ones are produced; Japanese plays are always the same and never vary.

Their Music

Although they make use of pitch, neither going up nor down, their natural and arti-

ficial music is so dissonant and harsh to our ears that it is quite a trial to listen to it for a quarter of an hour; but to please the Japanese we are obliged to listen to it for many hours. They themselves like it so much that they do not think there is anything to equal it in the wide world, and although our music is melodious, it is regarded by them with repugnance. They put on many plays and dramas about various wholesome and joyful things during their festivals, but they are always accompanied by this music.

Tight Rein

They keep a tight rein on gluttony, and also on rage and outward anger. And so although a person may be exceedingly hungry, he must on no account sit down at table, for they preserve the same peace and tranquility as a man who has just eaten. And however angry a father may be with his son, or a husband with his wife, or a man with his enemy, he must on no account show it, because they look upon the disorder of gluttony or of anger in a man as something very vile.

Origin of the World

As regards the beginning of all things, the deceivers of the common people declare that at the beginning there was a globe like an egg and that it broke in the middle with a great wind; half of it became the earth and the other half the sky, and from the middle emerged three men and three women, from whom all the Japanese are descended.

Izanagi and Izanami

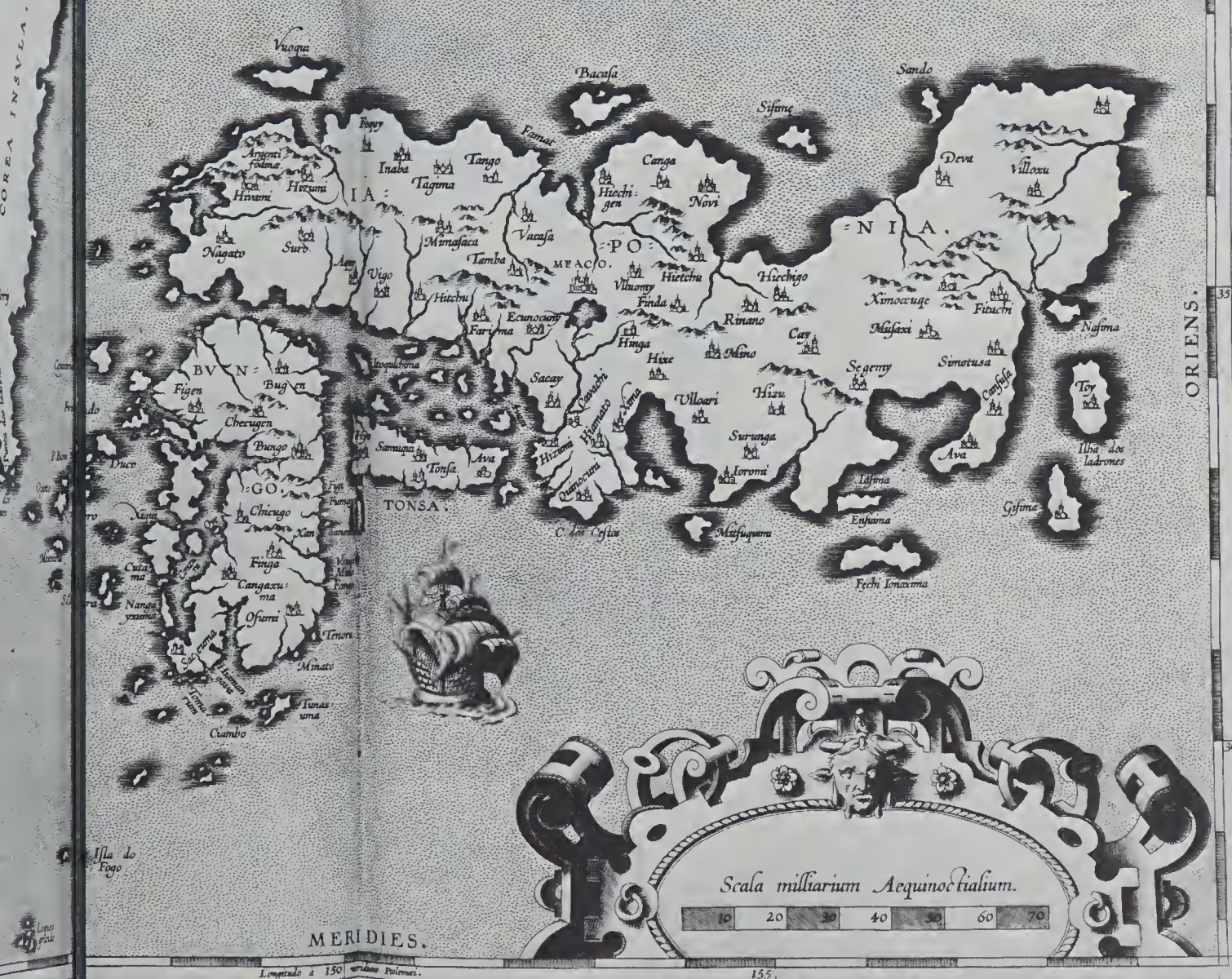
The third theory is peculiar to the country of Japan and is as follows. In the very beginning the world was a lake of water and there was neither land nor people. A man called Izanagi threw a hook-shaped trident from heaven, saying, "Perhaps there may be a river under the heavens." And stirring the water, he picked up a drop of mud which was under the water. This piece of mud was stuck to the trident, and when it came to the surface of the water it turned into an island, and the kingdom of Japan gradually took its origin from this. For this reason they regard this man Izanagi and his wife Izanami as the first founders of Japan and the progenitors of the Japanese race.



IAPONIAE INSVLAE
DESCRIPTIO.

*Ludovico Teisera
auctore.*

1595.



21

"Ritcheness and Plentiffullnesse"

In 1636 the first English expedition to China, led by Captain John Weddell, in search of trade, arrived in Canton. After attempting to invade the Canton estuary, Weddell was driven off by the Chinese and had to leave empty-handed, but a passenger accompanying him, returned with a diary full of accounts of day-to-day events and his experiences. This passenger was Peter Mundy, an English adventurer, who not only recorded what he saw, but also enlivened his narrative with perceptive sketches of Chinese life. Mundy's diary is somewhat loose and untidy in organization, being a collection of random impressions; but his comments remain important in what they reflect of English attitudes towards the Chinese in this first encounter.

Good land and habitation

Here within were many townes, villages, pretty vallies and Creekes in sightt, the higher land much smoother and better then thatt wee saw heretofore, with great store of Pine shrubbes and high trees of the same.

Snakes and Dogges Flesh eaten for good Meat in China

Here in the Bazare or Markett among other provisiones there was a snake to bee sold, aboutt 4 or 5 Foote long, alive, his Mouth sowed uppe For biting, accompted good meat, and Dogges Flesh allsoe.

Chaa, what it is

The people there gave us a certaine Drinke called Chaa,¹ which is only water with a kind of herbe boyled in itt. Aboutt Noone wee came aboard againe and tried to another towne on our larboard side over against Fumahone, where wee gotte a bullocke and some hens with promise to have much More in the Morning. Then broughtt they us some henne cutt in smalle peeces and Fresh porcke Don in like Manner, giving us Choppsticks to eatt our Meat, butt wee knew not how to use them, soe imployed our Fingers.

1. Cantonese word meaning "tea."

† Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, Vol. III, Part 1 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1919).

Having before mentioned Chopstickes, I will Describe a ordinary Fellow, as boatemmen, etts., how hee eateth his meat, which is commonly on the ground or Decke. Hee taketh the stickes (which are aboutt a foote longe) beetweene his Fingers and with them hee taketh uppe his Meat, beeing first cut smalle, as saltporcke, Fish, etts., with which they relish their Rice (it beeing their common Foode). I say first taking upp a bitt of the Meatte, hee presently applies to his Mouth a smalle porcelane [bowl] with sodden Rice. Hee thrusts, Crammes and stuffes it full of the said Rice with the Chopsticks in exceeding hasty Manner untill it will hold No more. They eat very often and are great Drinckers, Festivall, Frolike and Free² as farre as [we] saw. The better sort eat after the same Manner, butt they sitt at tables as we Doe.

Whatt Chucculatte is

Aboard this shippe was the first tyme I tasted Chacculatte, having formerly heard speake therof. It is made of a certaine graine growing in the West Indies, and in some parts there goeth currant For Mony. These they Dry, grinde to powder, boile in water, adde sugar, spice, odours, or other composition to it, and soe Drincking it warme in the Mornings is accompted very wholesome.

[Mundy's explanation of Illustration]

A. The habitt of those wee call Mandareenes (a portugall word), beeing officers of Commaund, having aboutt their middle a great girdle in which 2 such as himself may bee conteyned, made to stand outt, with the Kings armes embrodered before and behind them, som-

2. Mundy means "joyous, mirthful and frank."

whatt like the figure of a lyon. They were it not ordinarily, butt fitt themselves when occasion requires, For I have seene the same parties thatt att sometymes are as No. A.; att other tymes I have seene them as No. D. and H.

B. The same made sidewise thatt the forme of his Cappe may bee seene, as allsoe the forepart of his body.

C. A gentile yong Fellow with a curious netting caule³ over his head, his haire comming through beehind, which is Made uppe in Knobbes after the ordinary Manner, having a bodkin and Comb sticking in it, a Fanne in his hand, with long garmentts; Soe thatt I thincke Noe men in the world in their outtward habitt More resemble weomen then of these Doe.

D. Another attire I thinck common to all of the better sort.

E. The ordinary and common sort of people, it is said thatt when they Marry they were Caules from their forehead to this Marke.

F. The same with hattes of leaves and rattanes.

G. Another sort.

H. Another sort, of which I saw butt one, which was when wee went aboard the Junckes to the Mandareene of Lantao. Many with those kind off hattes stood on both sides; some of them I had seene att other tymes in the habitt of Mandareenes as No. A., as allsoe of the letter D., these beeing Commaunders of thatt Fleete.

I. A poore fellow with a short Cloke and Coate all in one, Made of Cajanes or Coconutt leaves to keepe them from the Raine, Most commonly boatemmen.

3. A horsehair cap or a net for the hair.

K. Many youtnes and boies I have seene in this manner, butt no Men, part offe their haire hanging loose aboutt their browes and head and the rest bound uppe.

L. A Mandareene or officer sitting in his officiall robes att a table writing with a pensill [brush] as all in generall Doe.

M. Is thatt which holds his Incke, the one side containing blacke, the other redde; 2 little partitiones with water where hee Dippes his pensill and so tempers his Incke.

N. An Invention of [*sic*] with 5 peakes or spires, wheron hee putts his pencills For nott Fowling the Carpitt or table.

O. The paper, beegining their writing at the left hand and their lines from the toppe downe toward the bottome.

P. His Fanne: seeldome any Men of quallity withoutt them.

Q. A quitasoll [umbrella] held over him, if hee bee in the sonne: Scarce any withoutt them as they passe to and Fro.

R. A large board with a long handle with a paper pasted over it, wheron, I conceive, is written his Commission, and is allwais with him and carried before him as hee goes.

S. As I remember, when our prisoners came before Nurette, they all fell Downe on their knees and strooke their foreheads against the ground 3 tymes.⁴

T. Inferiour people kneeling before officers, itt beeing usuall; and for thatt purpose I have seene some with little Cusheons tyed to their Knees.

U. A Table covered with Damaske, Fastned at the Corners with buttones and loopes; this is ordinary silke, beeing heere soe Cheape.



4. Refers to the seizure of a junk by the British.



Sundry habits of Chinois.

China Men sell their Children

The poorer sort of Chineses selling their Children to pay their Debtts or Maynetaine themselves (which itt seemes is somewhat tollerated here), butt with this condition, as letting them to hire or binding them servauntts For 30, 40, 50 yeare, and after to bee Freed. Some sell them outrightt withoutt any Condition att all, bringing them wrapt uppe in a bagge secretly by Nightt, and soe part with them For 2 or 4 Ryalls [Reales] of eightt a peece.

Great eaters, Drinckers and Gamesters

The Chinois [is] a great (and offten) eater, Drincker and gamester. Soe thatt some will play away all thatt they have, then their Children, then their wives, and last off all themselves, and worcke them selves and all out againe in tyme.

Poligamy allowed

They may keepe Many wives (as Doe the Turkes) according to their Meanes. Here-aboutts a great part offe them are pock-fretten or eaten with the smalle pockes.

Chinas excellencies

This Countrie May bee said to excell in these particulers: Antiquity, largenesse, Ritchenesse, healthynesse, Plentiffullnesse. For Arts and manner off governmentt I thinck noe Kingdome in the world Comparable to it, Considered alltogether.

Porcelane: how Made by report

China Porcelane or earthen ware; the best in the world made uppe in the Country. I enquired the Manner off it. They generally say it is off a Certaine white stone, beaten to poudre, sifted and kneaded with water into a paste, Formed as they please,

painted and baked as with us and as soone, Butt thatt they should ly 100 yeares undergrounde beefore they came to perffection, soe thatt hee thatt beegins them Never sees their end, butt leaves that to his posterity after him, as some write.

How the Chinois write

The China writing beeginning From the rightt hand toward the lefft, and their lynes From the toppe Downeward thus:

7	4	1
8	5	2
9	6	3

where they beegin with 1 and proceed to 2 and 3 in the First lyne, then to 4, 5, 6 in the second, etts., beeginning their bookes att the Farthest and wrong end as wee Conceave, or as wee use. Butt these few Following words goe Forward according to our Custome. They all write with pen-cills and blacke and Red Incke made into Dry past which they Distemper with water when they will use itt.

An Invention to Cast accompts withall in lieu off Counters

Allsoe they use a redier way instead off our Counters with an Invention off beades on wyres on a Frame Made after the Manner underneath. The First beades signifie unites, the 2d tens, the 3d hundreds, the 4th thousands, etts. The undermost are each butt one in their owne place. The single bead above is 5 of the same. Those thatt are putt close to the Middle barre are in valuation; as For example the said No. off 345678 is thus expressed on the Frame; and soe when they make use off itt, they remooove the beades to and Fro as wee doe our Counters.

I consider it a
that human c
should today b
in the two extr
Europe and in
which adorns t
the opposite ed
Now the Ch
lenges Europe
certainly surpa
with us in m
equal combat,
we. But what

† Donald F. Lach,

Novissima Sinica

To European merchants of the 1600's China was a vast marketplace to be explored and exploited. To the missionary, the Middle Kingdom was an enormous nation of non-Christians, heathens to be schooled and converted to Western religions. Europeans looked upon Oriental life and institutions with fascinated but fleeting curiosity: the Chinese were considered exotic, incredible, quaint, curious, and sometimes barbaric. But one European observer, the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, believed that Chinese ideas were to be taken seriously "even" by advanced and sophisticated Westerners. In this extract from his essay *Novissima Sinica* ("Latest News of China"), first published in 1697, Leibniz compares the virtues of European and Chinese civilizations, suggesting that perhaps Europe needed missionaries from China. The reading reveals the author's knowledge of China as one of considerable depth for that period.

I consider it a singular plan of the fates that human cultivation and refinement should today be concentrated, as it were, in the two extremes of our continent, in Europe and in Tschina (as they call it), which adorns the Orient as Europe does the opposite edge of the earth.

Now the Chinese Empire, which challenges Europe in cultivated area, and certainly surpasses her in population, vies with us in many other ways in almost equal combat, so that now they win, now we. But what should I put down first by

way of comparison? To go over everything, even though useful, would be lengthy and is not our proper task in this place. In the useful arts and in practical experience with natural objects we are, all things considered, about equal to them, and each people has knowledge which it could with profit communicate to the other. In profundity of knowledge and in the theoretical disciplines we are their superiors. For besides logic and metaphysics, and the knowledge of things incorporeal, which we justly claim as

† Donald F. Lach, *The Preface to Leibniz' Novissima Sinica* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1957).

peculiarly our province, we excel by far in the understanding of concepts which are abstracted by the mind from the material, i.e., in things mathematical, as is in truth demonstrated when Chinese astronomy comes into competition with our own. The Chinese are thus seen to be ignorant of that great light of the mind, the art of demonstration, and they have remained content with a sort of empirical geometry, which our artisans universally possess. They also yield to us in military science, not so much out of ignorance as by deliberation. For they despise everything which creates or nourishes ferocity in men, and almost in emulation of the higher teachings of Christ (and not, as some wrongly suggest, because of anxiety), they are averse to war. They would be wise indeed if they were alone in the world. But as things are, it comes back to this, that even the good must cultivate the arts of war, so that the evil may not gain power over everything. In these matters, then, we are superior.

But who would have believed that there is on earth a people who, though we are in our view so very advanced in every branch of behavior, still surpass us in comprehending the precepts of civil life? Yet now we find this to be so among the Chinese, as we learn to know them better. And so if we are their equals in the industrial arts, and ahead of them in contemplative sciences, certainly they surpass us (though it is almost shameful to confess this) in practical philosophy, that is, in the precepts of ethics and politics adapted to the present life and use of mortals. Indeed, it is difficult to describe how beautifully all the laws of the Chinese, in contrast to those of other peoples, are

directed to the achievement of public tranquility and the establishment of social order, so that men shall be disrupted in their relations as little as possible.

In a vast multitude of men they have virtually accomplished more than the founders of religious orders among us have achieved within their own narrow ranks. So great is obedience toward superiors and reverence toward elders, so religious, almost, is the relation of children toward parents, that for children to contrive anything violent against their parents, even by word, is almost unheard of, and the perpetrator seems to atone for his actions even as we make a parricide pay for his deed. Moreover, there is among equals, or those having little obligation to one another, a marvellous respect, and an established order of duties. To us, not enough accustomed to act by reason and rule, these smack of servitude; yet among them, where these duties are made natural by use, they are observed gladly.

The Reverend Fathers Gerbillon¹ and Bouvet,² French Jesuits, along with four others, who are mathematicians from the Académie des Sciences, have been sent to the Orient to teach the monarch, not only the mathematical arts, but also the essence of our philosophy. But if this process should be continued I fear that we may soon become inferior to the Chinese in all branches of knowledge. I do not say this because I grudge them new light; rather I rejoice. But it is desirable that they in turn teach us those things which are especially in our interest: the greatest use of practical philosophy and a more

1. Jean-François Gerbillon (1654-1701) embarked with five other Jesuits and the first ambassador to Siam in 1685.

2. Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730) composed several works in Chinese on Western geometry.

perfect manner of living, to say nothing now of their other arts. Certainly the condition of our affairs, slipping as we are into ever greater corruption, seems to me such that we need missionaries from the Chinese who might teach us the use and practice of natural religion, just as we have sent them teachers of revealed theology.

And so I believe that if someone expert, not in the beauty of goddesses but in the excellence of peoples, were selected as judge, the golden apple would be awarded to the Chinese, unless we should win by virtue of one great but super-human thing, namely, the divine gift of the Christian religion.



Habitus e China regno pretiosę elegantię et rerum omnium affluentissimum



Cleedinge van die wt China een Coninckryck overvloedich van alle schoonheyt en costelickheyt

Linshoten, a German traveler, made these two plates in the late 1600's. The plate on the left depicts simple Chinese in native costume; the one on the right shows a Chinese mandarin and lady in their rich costume.

The Japanese Discovery of Europe

As in the case of China, the abruptness of the first encounters between Japan and the West were greatly intensified by the traditional nature of Japanese society. Both China and Japan had remained virtually isolated from Europe and America, confident of the superiority of their traditional, time-honored ways. Severe penalties, exile or death, awaited any Chinese or Japanese who traveled to a far-off continent and then returned. However, some Japanese scholars obtained books from Europe, read of the scientific advances of the Western nations, and endeavored to warn their countrymen against preserving tradition for tradition's sake. Thus, as early as the 1700's, the Japanese were introduced to European writings on astronomy, science, technology, medicine, and mathematics, and by the end of the century there were many good collections of European scientific works in different parts of the country. Among the earliest scholars to study and comment on Western knowledge were Shiba Kōkan, Honda Toshiaki, and Matsudaira Sadanobu. The excerpts which follow are examples of the attempts on the part of these three men to startle the Japanese out of their complacency and to point out how science and mathematics, as well as language reforms, could be the keys to making Japan one of the great powers of the world.

Human beings from the age of two can say "Papa" and "Mama." As they grow up, they naturally acquire familiarity with many words. No one has to study how to pronounce the sounds [for example] of *tenchi*,¹ but no one can read the charac-

1. A Japanese word meaning "heavenly wisdom."

ters for the word without learning them. Chinese characters are used in both China and Japan, and without studying them it is impossible to read books or to understand the teachings in the classics. However, in Japan the pronunciation that is employed is basically the native one. Ordinary con-

† Donald Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe 1720-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

versations are invariably in native words, and there are no characters for many of the expressions.

The Western nations, instead of characters, use signs that merely indicate the pronunciation. Is it not a waste of time to read books first without understanding the meaning and only then to ask a teacher about it? In the West they use the sounds of their own language as the basis of writing, and they have but to look at a book if they wish to study the principles of heaven and earth. It is like reading Japanese kana.² No distinction is made between elegant and common language. One can learn all the fundamental principles without a teacher.

Shiba Kōkan

If a careful study is made of their system of writing and ours, it will become apparent which is correct and which false. The failings in our way of life cause people to spend most of their time in idle and elegant pursuits, the number of which constantly increases. They are forgetful of themselves, and when they reach old age it is too late for them to repent. It was fortunate for the Westerners that they foresaw this eventuality and took steps to avoid a system of writing so profitless to the nation.

Honda Toshiaki

I began about 1792 or 1793 to collect Dutch books. The barbarian nations are skilled in the sciences, and considerable profit may be derived from their works of astronomy and geography, as well as from their military weapons and their methods of internal and external medicine. However, their books may serve to encourage

2. Japanese writing system, based on the sounds of syllables.

idle curiosity or may express harmful ideas. It might thus seem advisable to ban them, but prohibiting these books would not prevent people from reading them. There is, moreover, profit to be derived from them. Such books and other foreign things should therefore not be allowed to pass in large quantities into the hands of irresponsible people; nevertheless it is desirable to have them deposited in a government library.

Matsudaira Sadanobu

Everyone in Europe now knows about this [Copernican] theory, which was first given to the world some 280 years ago, but Chinese and Japanese do not even dream of such things. I can understand why people might suppose that the sun causes the day and the night, but some declare that every day a new sun comes into being, travels from east to west, and then disappears; others think the sun burrows under the earth each day to reemerge in the east and travel westward.

In recent years, however, European astronomy has been introduced to Japan. People have been astonished by the theory that the earth is actually whirling about, and no one is ready to believe it. In Japan even great scholars are so amazed by this notion that they assert, "If the earth were in fact spinning about, my rice bowl and water bottle would turn over, and my house and storehouse would be broken to bits. How can such a theory be true?"

It is entirely to be expected that disbelievers are by far the majority. Even in Europe the Copernican theory was not at first accepted; only after outstanding men had resolutely subscribed to it was everyone finally converted.

When it comes to grand edifices, no country in the world can compare with England.

There is also no country comparable to England in the manufacture of very fine things. Among the articles imported into Japan by the Dutch, there have been none more precious than the watches. Some of them are so exquisite that hairs are split to make them. London is thought to produce the finest such workmanship in the world. Next comes Paris in France, and then Amsterdam in Holland. The houses in their towns and cities, even in the outskirts, are built of stone. They are from two to five stories high and surpassingly beautiful. Why is it that the people of these three cities, who are human beings like everyone else, have attained such excellence? It is because many centuries have elapsed since they were civilized and because their political institutions are founded on the principles of natural government.

There is no place in the world to compare with Europe. It may be wondered in what way this supremacy was achieved. In the first place, the European nations have behind them a history of five to six thousand years. In this period they have delved deep into the beauties of the arts, have divined the foundations of government, and have established a system based on a thorough examination of the factors that naturally make a nation prosperous. Because of their proficiency in mathematics, they have excelled also in astronomy, calendar making, and surveying. They have elaborated laws of navigation such that there is nothing simpler for them than to sail the oceans of the world.

Honda Toshiaki



This representation of a Portuguese warrior was executed by a Japanese artist in the late 1600's.

An Imperial Edict to the King of England

Throughout the period of their earliest contacts, Europeans were known in China as “men of the Western Ocean.” But as European and Chinese values began to clash, sometimes violently, the Chinese classified Europeans and Americans, as they had classified all other peoples outside of China, as “barbarians.” Any foreigner who wished contact or trade with the “Celestial Empire” was forced to pay tribute to the Emperor and, in so doing, accept the inferior status of a tributary. The system had served the Chinese well for thousands of years before the British appeared on the scene, and naturally it was assumed that they too would accept the same presupposed inequality. Despite British protests, assertions of power and military superiority, and demands that negotiations be conducted on the basis of equality of both parties, the Emperor refused to depart from traditional practices and summarily dismissed British demands. In 1793 the English dispatched their first embassy to China, under the direction of Earl Macartney, for the purpose of improving commercial and trade relations between the two countries. Lord Macartney refused to kowtow (“three kneelings and nine prostrations”) before Chinese officials, and, although the ceremony was waived, the mission accomplished little of what it originally set out to do. A few days after Macartney’s first audience, Emperor Ch’ien Lung sent a letter containing a series of mandates to King George III of England, showing Chinese attitudes toward the English, indeed toward all foreigners.

† Harley Farnsworth MacNair, *Modern Chinese History: Selected Readings*, Vol. I (Taipei, Republic of China: The Commercial Press, Ltd., 1957).

"You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilisation, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. Your Envoy has crossed the seas and paid his respects at my Court on the anniversary of my birthday. To show your devotion, you have also sent offerings of your country's produce.

"I have perused your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy. In consideration of the fact that your Ambassador and his deputy have come a long way with your memorial and tribute, I have shown them high favour and have allowed them to be introduced into my presence. To manifest my indulgence, I have entertained them at a banquet and made them numerous gifts. I have also caused presents to be forwarded to the Naval Commander and six hundred of his officers and men, although they did not come to Peking, so that they too may share in my all-embracing kindness.

"As to your entreaty to send one of your nationals to be accredited to my Celestial Court and to be in control of your country's trade with China, this request is contrary to all usage of my dynasty and cannot possibly be entertained. It is true that Europeans, in the service of the dynasty, have been permitted to live at Peking, but they are compelled to adopt Chinese dress, they are strictly confined to their own precincts and are never permitted to return home. You are presumably familiar with our dynastic regulations. Your proposed Envoy to my Court could not be placed in a

position similar to that of European officials in Peking who are forbidden to leave China, nor could he, on the other hand, be allowed liberty of movement and the privilege of corresponding with his own country; so that you would gain nothing by his residence in our midst.

"Moreover, Our Celestial dynasty possesses vast territories, and tribute missions from the dependencies are provided for by the Department for Tributary States, which ministers to their wants and exercises strict control over their movements. It would be quite impossible to leave them to their own devices. Supposing that your Envoy should come to our Court, his language and national dress differ from that of our people, and there would be no place in which to bestow him. It may be suggested that he might imitate the Europeans permanently resident in Peking and adopt the dress and customs of China, but, it has never been our dynasty's wish to force people to do things unseemly and inconvenient. Besides, supposing I sent an Ambassador to reside in your country, how could you possibly make for him the requisite arrangements? Europe consists of many other nations besides your own: if each and all demanded to be represented at our Court, how could we possibly consent? The thing is utterly impracticable. How can our dynasty alter its whole procedure and system of etiquette, established for more than a century, in order to meet your individual views? If it be said that your object is to exercise control over your country's trade, your nationals have had full liberty to trade at Canton for many a year, and have received the greatest consideration at our hands. Missions have been sent by Portugal

and Italy, preferring similar requests. The Throne appreciated their sincerity and loaded them with favours, besides authorising measures to facilitate their trade with China.

"If you assert that your reverence for Our Celestial dynasty fills you with a desire to acquire our civilisation, our ceremonies and code of laws differ so completely from your own that, even if your Envoy were able to acquire the rudiments of our civilisation, you could not possibly transplant our manners and customs to your alien soil. Therefore, however adept the Envoy might become, nothing would be gained thereby.

"Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely, to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfil the duties of the State: strange and costly objects do not interest me. If I have commanded that the tribute offerings sent by you, O King, are to be accepted, this was solely in consideration for the spirit which prompted you to dispatch them from afar. Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated unto every country under Heaven, and Kings of all nations have offered their costly tribute by land and sea. As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures."

A further mandate to King George III dealt in detail with the British Ambassador's proposals and the Emperor's reasons for declining them.

"Yesterday your Ambassador petitioned my Ministers to memorialise me regarding your trade with China, but his proposal is not consistent with our dynastic usage and cannot be entertained. Hitherto, all

European nations, including your own country's barbarian merchants, have carried on their trade with Our Celestial Empire at Canton. Such has been the procedure for many years, although Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its own borders. There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce. But as the tea, silk and porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces, are absolute necessities to European nations and to yourselves, we have permitted, as a signal mark of favour, that foreign *hongs*¹ should be established at Canton, so that your wants might be supplied and your country thus participate in our beneficence.

"We therefore now bestow upon you various costly gifts. Do you, O King, display even more energetic loyalty in future and endeavour to deserve for ever Our gracious affection, so that we may conform to Our earnest resolve to pacify distant tribes and to manifest Our Imperial clemency.

"Chu Kuei is to hand this mandate to your Agent, for transmission to yourself, in order that you may be encouraged to display still greater gratitude and reverent submission hereafter, in acknowledgement of Our indulgence.

"It is contrary to Our dynastic ordinances for Our officials to enter into social relations with barbarians, and Chu Kuei acted therefore quite properly in returning the presents which were sent to the former Viceroy and Superintendent of Customs at Canton."

1. Chinese name for "warehouses," or "merchant firms."

America

The Chinese referred to their country as the "Middle Kingdom." It is from this position that the Chinese viewed the world around them, including Europe and the United States, and it is this world view which confronted Westerners who thought themselves to be from the cultural, political, and commercial center of the world. Chinese attitudes derived in part from their ignorance of geography of the Western nations. Despite the fact that they had pioneered, even before the Europeans, developments in the compass, in navigation, and in mapmaking, geography was not generally studied nor was it considered a valuable part of a scholar's training. But following China's defeat and humiliation at the hands of the British in the Opium War of the mid-1800's, a few Chinese scholars who hoped to modernize their country so that it could better defend itself against the "barbarians" began to study Western geography. In 1850 there appeared in China a summary of world geography entitled *Brief Description of the Oceans Roundabout*, which represents the total knowledge of world geography in China during the 1800's. Widely read throughout China's era of conflict with Western nations, this description served to mold for some time Chinese concepts of the physical world.

In the following excerpts Hsu Chi-yu describes the history, geography, government, and social structure of the United States, at the same time revealing his personal impressions of American institutions and philosophy of government. This work was considered by the Chinese the most accurate and scientific description of world geography to date.

† Fred W. Drake, "A Nineteenth-Century View of the United States of America from Hsu Chi-yu's *Ying-huan chih-lüeh*," *Papers on China*, Vol. XIX (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, 1965).

Explaining [America's] situation in terms of the globe, the three continents are on the east, while America is on the west. The three continents are on the face of the globe, while America is on the back of the globe. America is a continent and is not connected with the three continents. It is divided into two lands, northern and southern. The northern land is in the shape of a flying fish. The southern and northern parts are like the thigh of a man wearing billowing trousers, and they are connected by a narrow waist in the middle.

The climate of each state of [the United States of] America is agreeable. The north is like Yen (Hopei) and Chin (Shansi), but the south is similar to Kiangsu and Chekiang. The seacoast is long and level; there are no deserts and little malaria. (Note: the south has a little, but it is not very severe.) The land is level and fertile, so the five grains are all suitable. Cotton is of the highest quality and is the largest product. Both England and France get their cotton here. All varieties of vegetables and fruit are [raised] here. Tobacco is also very good, and it is carried in trade to distant places. The products of the mountains are coal, salt, iron, and zinc. . . . South and North America are several ten thousand *li*¹ in length, but the essence [i.e., best land] is in the United States. The favorable climate and fertile land are almost as good as that of China. The English crossed ten thousand *li* of sea to get the place, and this can be called obtaining the pearl [i.e., hitting the bull's-eye]. They developed it for more than two hundred years, and it quickly achieved a prosperity which has overflowed into the rest of the world.

1. Chinese unit of distance, equivalent to about one-third of a mile.

There is a large river called the Mississippi whose source is in the Northwest. It flows southeastward and enters the sea. Its vast size is comparable to the Yellow River in China. Besides this, there are the . . . St. Lawrence River, Delaware River, Potomac River, and the Rio Grande.

The government of [the United States of] America is very simple [i.e., there is no red tape]. The taxes are also light. Every year a census is taken. Every two years, out of 47,700 people, a person distinguished in ability and knowledge is elected to live in the capital to participate in the country's government. In the capital where the president resides, the states have established a congress, and each state elects two senators to be in the congress. They participate in deciding great matters of government—like making treaties and war, and like [regulating] commerce, taxation, and stipends. Six years is the length of office. Each state sets up six judges to take charge of penalties. They are also elected to fill the office. If there is one who is unjust, the public, after deliberation, dismisses him.

[The Americans] have not established titles of king and count, and they do not follow rules of succession. The public organs are entrusted to public opinion. There has never been a system of this sort in ancient or modern times. This is really a wonder.

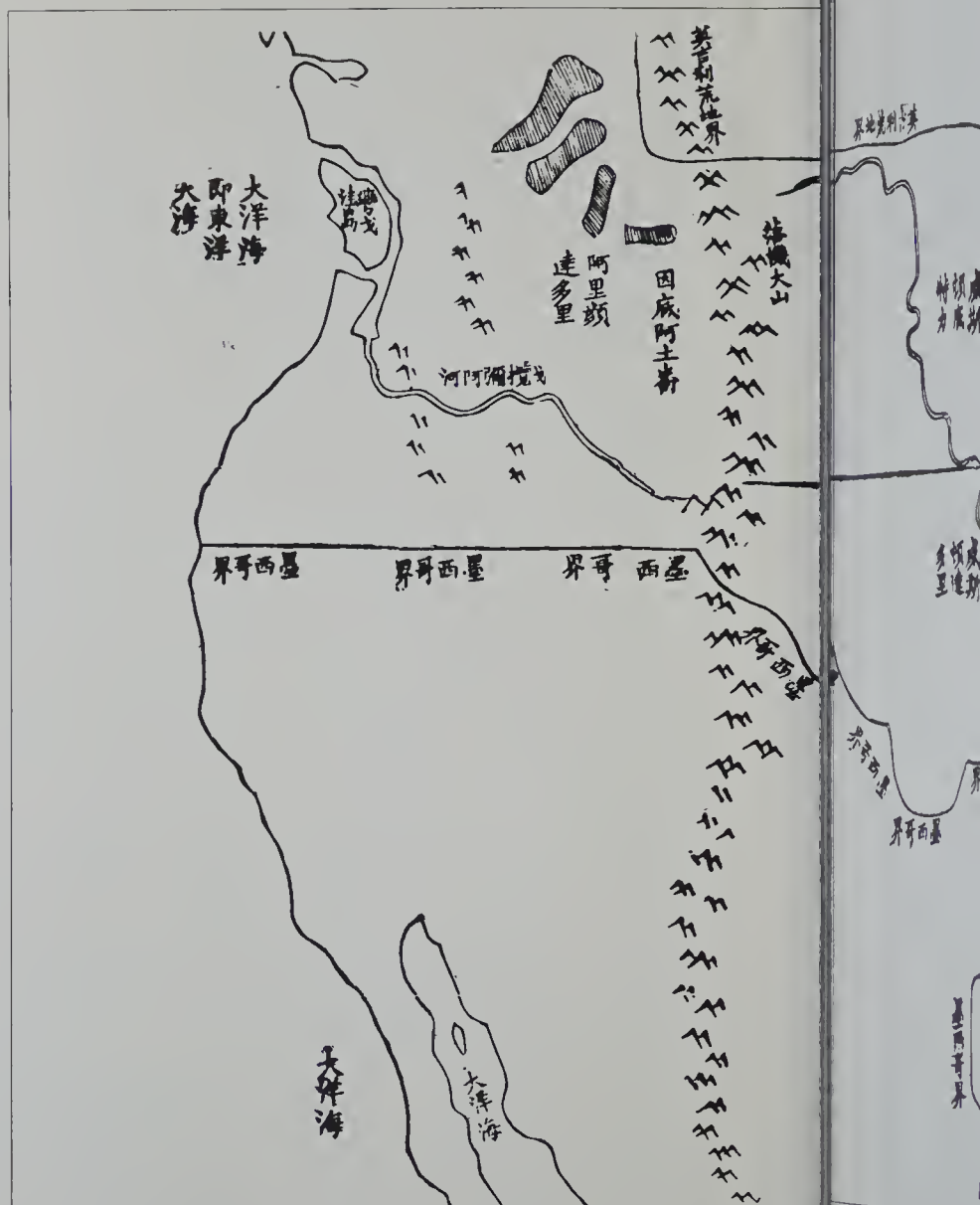
From among the governors of each state, a president is elected who alone governs the affairs of making treaties and engaging in war. Every state obeys his orders. The method used to elect him is the same as that used to elect the governors of the various states. The term of office is also four years, but if he holds a second

term, it is eight years. From Washington to the present, the country has been established sixty odd years. (Note: Washington died of an illness in 1798.) There have been altogether nine men as president. The current president was elected by Virginia.

[The District of] Columbia is situated at the tail end of the western branch of the bay of Maryland [i.e., Chesapeake Bay]. It is northwest of Virginia and it straddles the boundaries of the two states [of Virginia and Maryland] for forty *li*. It is the capital of the Union. Formerly, after Washington defeated England, he lived in Columbia. It was set aside to be the governing place of the president. The gentry of the Union all gather in this place to discuss the nation's policies. Because the city was founded by Washington, and because he was the founding father of the Union, it was named Washington. There is a presidential mansion, the Capitol, and courts.

To the west there is a different city called Georgetown, where there is a college and an armory where cannon are cast. On the opposite shore [of the Potomac] there is another city called Alexandria, where there is an armory and an orphanage. . . . There are 43,000 inhabitants.

Each of the former sections [i.e., colonies] [was] separately established as [a state]. Every state has one governor and a lieutenant governor to assist him. (Note: there are states with one lieutenant governor and some states with several.) The term of office is four years. (Note: there are also states which change the office every year or every other year.) The public comes together to discuss the matter, and if they all say he is worthy, the governor holds



office for another four years. (Note: after eight years they are not allowed to continue in office.) Otherwise, the lieutenant governor will be elected as governor. If the lieutenant governor is not in harmony with the expectations of the people, they hold an election. The country and city elders each write out the surname and given name [of the person they want] and cast this into a small box. When that has

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a city was founded and the land was called a territory. These places are in addition to the states. Today, beside the states, there have already been added three territories. The capital, Washington, where the president resides, is not included in the number of states and territories. There are twenty-six states and three territories. By 1840, the population was somewhat over 17,169,000.

In the United States the revenue from taxes is about 40,000,000 *yüan*.² The salaries of the civil officials total 4,760,000 *yüan*. The salaries of army officers and soldiers are 4,300,000 *yüan*. Naval officers and sailors receive 4,570,000 *yüan*. Miscellaneous expenses are 3,800,000 *yüan*. The cost of land development is 13,000,000 *yüan*. Although the president controls the finances, his own salary is set at 10,000 *yüan* and he cannot get even a cent more for his private use.

The set number of professional soldiers of the United States does not exceed ten thousand, and these are distributed to various forts and passes. Beside this, with the exception of scholars, doctors, and astronomers, the farmers, laborers, and merchants from twenty to forty years of age can be conscripted by the officials and they are issued [identification] cards. They serve as a militia. Food and weapons are provided by the individual. In peacetime each works at his own occupation, but if there is war, they all enter the ranks together. Various ranks of officers have been set up, but these offices have only rank and no stipend. Every year while the land is not being worked, they gather for exercises. This militia is something in excess of 1,700,000 men. This is like the method

2. Chinese dollar.

used by the ancient [Chinese] of quartering the troops on the farmers.

[Washington] left only twenty warships and a number of professional soldiers fixed at ten thousand. Yet the territory is very extensive and the natural resources are very abundant. Each section of the country is in agreement to unite at a command, so all the great countries maintain cordial relations with it, and there is not one which dares insult it. From the time of the treaty of peace with England, sixty odd years have passed and there has been no war. Its merchant ships come to Kwangtung every year, but their number is less than those of England.

Because its ships fly a flag of variegated colors, the people of Kwangtung call it the country of the multicolored flag. (Note: its flag is square, with alternating red and white [stripes]; in the right corner there is a separate square of black on which are placed white spots picturing the Big Dipper.)

There are many small rivers and these have been connected to build canals. They also build locomotives (fire-wheel vehicles), using rocks for the road with melted iron poured on them [to hold them together] in order to facilitate the movement of the locomotive. In one day it can travel over three hundred *li*. Steamships (fire-wheel junks) are very numerous. They move back and forth on the rivers and seas like shuttles, and this is so because the land produces coal. (Note: steamships must burn coal, for the power [generated] from wood is too weak and cannot be used.)

The states all believe in the Western religion [Christianity]. [The people] enjoy discussing scholarly matters, and colleges

are established everywhere. The scholars are divided into three categories: (1) those who study astronomy, geography, and Christianity; (2) those who study medicine to cure illnesses; (3) those who study law to manage trials and imprisonments.

From the beginning of the universe [until recently] America had no contact with other continents. Its original inhabitants possess the five senses, the members and trunk of the body. They are similar to Chinese [in appearance]. Their complexion is purplish-red, like copper, or like the color of palm fiber [i.e., brown]. They cut their hair, leaving several inches remaining; this is gathered on top the head and bound together in a topknot. This region originally had no cows, horses, sheep, swine, dogs, or cats. When the Spanish first arrived and came ashore riding horses, the natives on shore looking on thought horse and man were one, and they all fled in terror.

During the Hung Chih period of the Ming [1488-1506] there was a Spanish officer called Columbus, who sailed a great ship westward in search of new land. He arrived at the archipelagoes of the Caribbean Sea, and he then knew there was the spacious land of America. He first took hold of Colombia. [Later] the Spaniard Cortez learned of Mexico's abundant wealth. He led troops to attack Mexico and snatched away the country. He then expanded to the south, and the Spaniards gradually spread and settled in each country in western South America, like the gnawing of silkworms.

When England acquired the land of North America, [the English] drove out the aborigines and occupied their fertile land. People from the three islands [Eng-

land, Ireland, and Scotland] were sent to fill the land, and they hurried to it like water rushing to a pool. Unemployed French, Dutch, Danes, and Swedes also crossed over the sea. The land gradually developed, and it turned out to be a fertile place. The English had a high official reside there and maintain it. Cities were laid out along the coast, and taxes were used to enrich England. Trade flourished and gradually became very abundant. Because of this, sudden wealth and power were achieved.

During the Ch'ien Lung period [1736-1796], England and France went to war, and this war lasted for several years without a final decision. Many ways were devised to extract money, and taxes doubled. According to the former regulations, the dealers in tea were to pay a tax, but the English issued an order that the purchaser was to also pay a tax. The Americans were unable to endure this. In 1775 the gentry gathered together in a board and wanted to deliberate with the resident headman. The headman drove them away and directed the levying of taxes even more vigorously. The public was enraged and threw tea aboard a ship into the sea. They plotted to raise troops to oppose the English. There was one named Washington who was from another part of the United States. He was born in 1731. At the age of ten his father died, and his mother raised him. At an early age he had great ambitions, and he was naturally gifted in both civil and military affairs. His bravery and eminence surpassed all others. He was a military officer for the English. Just at the time when a war was being fought with France, local savages were plundering the southern area. Washington led troops

to oppose them. . . . The English general did not record his achievement. The villagers wanted to choose Washington as chief, but Washington feigned sickness and declined; he returned to his home, closed the gate, and did not go out.

When the people rebelled against England, they insisted that Washington be the commander in chief. This situation arose very suddenly so that weapons, powder, provisions, and fodder were all lacking. But Washington encouraged the people with his patriotism. When the arrangements had been made, they besieged a large city. At this time the English general had his navy outside the city. Suddenly a great wind arose, and the ships were all scattered. Washington jumped at this chance and took the city. Later the English army assembled in great force and attacked. Washington's army was defeated and frightened; it wanted to disband and scatter. Washington, with a sense of duty, gathered the remaining army together, and again they fought and won. The bloody war lasted for eight years with recurring setbacks, but [the people] were repeatedly roused to determination. Washington's resoluteness did not decline, and the English army was becoming old. France raised an entire army of men which crossed the sea [to America]. It and Washington's army attacked the English army from both sides. Spain and Holland also checked the advance of English troops and encouraged England to make peace. England was unable to withstand, so a treaty was made with Washington, and the boundary of the neighboring country [Canada] was delineated. The northern region of cold, barren land still belonged to England, but the fertile land south of

the border was all given to Washington. This was in 1782.

When Washington had settled the country, he handed over his military authority and desired to return to his fields. The people were unwilling to part with him and chose him to be the country's ruler. Washington then said to the people that it was selfish to take a country and pass it on to one's descendants; he said it was better to choose a person of virtue for the responsibility of governing people.

From the time when Washington made peace with England and ended the war, he devoted special attention to agriculture and commerce. He issued a command that if from that time on any governor plotted to seize another state's port, to strip away the fat from the people, to begin military operations, or to cause hatreds to arise, the people should punish him.

As for Washington, he was an extraordinary man. In raising a revolt, he was more courageous than Sheng or Kuang. In carrying out an occupation, he was braver than Ts'ao or Liu. When he took up the three-foot double-edged sword and opened up the boundaries for ten thousand *li*, he did not assume the throne and was unwilling to begin a line of succession. Moreover he invented a method of election. He achieved a government of justice. He governed his country with reverence and respected good customs. He did not esteem military achievements, and he was very different from [the rulers] of other countries. I have seen his portrait; his bearing is imposing and excellent. Alas! Can he not be called a hero? Of all the famous Westerners of ancient and modern times, can Washington be placed in any position but the first?

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† Franz Schurmann
Modern China (New

The Distant and Strange Continent of Europe

The following description of Europe appeared in a compilation of descriptions of various countries with which the Chinese traded in the 1800's. As in the previous reading on the United States, this brief statement represents almost the entirety of Chinese knowledge of Europe at that time; it was the sole source of information on Europe even for Chinese officials dealing with China's foreign affairs. The unknown author probably had no first-hand acquaintance with his subject, but relied on translations of writings brought into China by European missionaries and on the personal accounts of a few Chinese who had traveled to Europe. Written in about 1840, during the Opium War, the selection was still considered "current" when it was included in a larger work compiled by Wang Hsi-ch'i in 1891.

Europe (*Ou-lo-pa*) is one of the five great continents. In land area it is the smallest, but it is compensated for this in other ways. Europe is about 7,700 miles (2,570 English miles) long, and 1,000 miles (333 English miles) broad, in all making 20 million square miles. Though it is smaller than the other four continents, its soil is fertile, its products are plentiful, it has many talented people and many famous places. For this reason, Europe's power in the present world is pre-eminent, and it has become a leading force in the five continents. Yet in ancient times its people hunted for a living, ate meat, and wore skins. Their customs

were barbaric, and their spirit was wild and free. But during our own Shang period (2000 B.C.) Greece and other countries gradually came under the influence of the Orient. For the first time they began to till fields and manufacture products, build cities and dig lakes. They began to do all kinds of things. Before long, writing and civilization began to flourish. Thus they became beautiful like the countries of the East.

During the time of our own P'ing Wang of the Chou Dynasty (around 770 B.C.) Rome arose in Italy and began to extend its rule over surrounding regions. By the time of the beginning of our Western Han

† Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell, eds., *Imperial China: The Decline of the Last Dynasty and the Origins of Modern China* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967).

Dynasty (206 B.C.) Rome succeeded in acquiring rule over the entire Western world. It was known everywhere, and even in our *Book of the Han Dynasty* where it was called Ta-ch'in. The Chin and the Wei Dynasties too called Rome Ta-ch'in, but also called it Li-chien.

But then internal conflicts arose, the military became more arrogant, and life was luxurious. During the Western Chin (A.D. 265-317) the Empire split in two parts, east and west. The western part still had its capital in Rome, but it lasted for only another hundred years or so. Toward the end of our first Sung Dynasty (A.D. 420-478) it was finally destroyed by local feudatories and barbarians. But the part which founded its rule in Constantinople lasted for many hundreds of years more. Yet rebellion and murder were frequent, disorder repeatedly broke out, and it too finally declined. With the decline of Rome during the reign of our illustrious Emperor Ching (A.D. 258-263), many great lords began to fight among each other for territory and cities, and so Europe gradually fell apart into many warring countries. During the middle of the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-906) Charlemagne, a wise and learned man, gifted with civil and military talents, became Emperor of the Germans and the French. His fame and virtue spread far afield, and all the barbarians submitted to him. He reorganized the army, instituted discipline, and revived the Roman Empire, thereby unifying Europe. When Charlemagne died, however, his descendants turned out to be incompetent. Hardly a hundred years elapsed, when Europe once again broke up. The great lords set up their own domains over which they made themselves kings. This is how

the countries of France, Germany, and Italy arose.

During the time of our Five Dynasties period (A.D. 907-960) the settlements of Northern Europe for the first time set up stable systems of rule, and laid down the various ranks, which then spread to other countries. In this way countries like Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark arose. These countries all made alliances with each other. . . .

As the situation is now, Russia controls the northeast of Europe. It is shaped like a palm-leaf fan. Hanging down from it is Sweden. From its southern cliffs, suddenly springing forth like an arm, is Denmark, sometimes also called the country of Lien. South of Lien are the various countries of the Germans. To the east is Prussia; to the south is Austria; to Austria's southeast is Western Turkey. Way down in the south and shaped like a human palm and bordering on the Mediterranean is Greece. The country shaped like a human leg with a shoe stuck on is Italy. The country in Europe's northwest corner is Switzerland. Northwest of Germany and bordering the sea is Holland. To the south of Holland you have Belgium, and southwest of Belgium you have France. To the southwest there is Spain. Also on the west, bordering the Great Sea, there is Portugal. The big island located in the great-cliff sea northwest of France is England.

These are the divisions of Europe. Those interested in geography can thus get an idea of its shape.

Europe's people are all tall and white. Only those who live in the northeast where it is very cold are short, and dwarfish. They have big noses and deep eyes. But their eyes are not of the same color, with brown,

green, and black being most frequent. They have heavy beards that go up to their temples, or are wound around their jaws. They let their hair grow to two or three inches. But if it gets longer they cut it. The women leave on all of their hair. The women dress their hair somewhat like Chinese women, but gather it together in a net. The color of their whiskers and hair is different. They have yellow, red, mottled, or black, all kinds. The men wear flat-topped, tube-like, narrow-brimmed hats of different heights ranging from four inches to over one foot. They are made of felt or of silk. When they meet people, they lift their hats as a sign of respect. Their clothes are narrow and their sleeves are tight. The length only goes down to their bellies. Their trousers are bound tightly around their waists. But their outer garments are loose and long, and reach as far down as their knees. They wear collars in front and back. Their inner garments are of cotton, but their outer garments are of wool. They often wear boots which are made of leather.

Women's clothes are also tight and their sleeves stick to their bodies. They wear skirts which are long and brush the ground. This is how they generally dress. For their ceremonial hats, ceremonial clothes, their military helmets and garments, they have different practices.

For their eating and drinking utensils they use gold, silver, and ceramics. When they eat they use knife and fork, and they do not use chopsticks. They eat mainly bread. Potatoes are staple. They mostly roast or broil fowl and game. They usually season it with preserves or olive oil. They drink spirits and soda water, as well as coffee in which they mix sugar. Its fragrance enlivens teeth and jaws, and

makes the spirit fresh and clear.

Now as to the way they build houses. On the outside they have no surrounding walls, and inside they have no courts. Sometimes they have many-storied buildings that go up for five or six, or seven or eight floors. They usually also dig out another underground floor; they use it for storage or go there to escape the heat. Their foundations are deep and solid. Their walls are substantial and thick. In hot or in cold weather nothing comes through them. In the winter they are warm inside and in the summer cool. They are very convenient.

Their palaces, temple buildings, pavilions, parks and lakes, and all their museums and scientific buildings are designed to delight the tourist. In size they are all very spacious, and ingeniously built. This indicates that the Westerners respect the arts, and try hard to become famous. Therefore they strive to be refined in everything they do, and overlook no small details.

Now for their machines. When they first invented them, they just relied on common sense. They tried this and rejected that, without ever finding out from anyone else how it ought to be done. However, they did some research and found people who investigated the fine points and propagated their usage. In this way they gradually developed all their machines such as steamships, steam trains, spinning machines, mining and canal-digging machines, and all machines for making weapons and gunpowder. Things improved day by day and helped enrich the nation and benefit the people. Day by day they became more prosperous and will keep on becoming so.



*In the late 1800's the Japanese showed keen interest in Western inventions and customs. This woodcut, *Ballooning in America*, appeared in *People in Foreign Lands*, published in Japan in 1861.*



"American Couple," from *People in Foreign Lands* (1861).

Among the Western Tribes

If Europeans were mildly amused at what they believed to be the outlandish conduct and appearances of Asians, the Chinese and Japanese were also perplexed by the Westerners. Western languages, inventions, dress, customs, mannerisms, and physical features must have seemed particularly strange to Chinese and Japanese, considering that few of them had ever traveled beyond their provincial boundaries nor seen Westerners outside of the large treaty port cities. Thus, just as Western writings often included comments on the “little round noses and high cheekbones” of Chinese, the Chinese and Japanese have always been struck by the size of European noses and the variety of hair color, causing them to nickname Europeans *Ta-pi-tze*, “big noses” and “red hairs.” In these brief excerpts from his letters, the Chinese scholar Hwuy-ung describes for his brother his impressions of the Westerners he met during his travels in 1899.

To Tseng-Ching, from Hwuy-ung.

I am studying the language spoken here [English]; my cousin is assisting me when there is not much buying-selling. He says something in this curious-sounding tongue, gives me the rule and I repeat after him. What a strange manner they have here of fixing their speech on paper—no pencil (brush), no ink slab, none of the variety seen in our characters. They have slit pieces of metal to hold the ink which is kept liquid in small glass vessels. Will my

honored elder brother believe me when I say that there are only twenty-six different signs! And we have twice as many thousand! These simple signs are formed into groups of infinite variety, and then they correspond to ideas. But what a poor language it must be, with only twenty-six signs! Each of these signs has a sound; yet when they are grouped, all the separate sounds go to make only one. I have trouble in understanding this; for I give the sound of each sign. At present when I hear this tongue—or, I should say, the echo of it—I

† Hwuy-ung, *A Chinaman's Opinion of Us and of His Own Country*, trans. by J. A. Makepeace (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927).

can grasp at nothing. I am like one clutching at the mist, ten parts perplexed. The people here [do] not open their mouths; they whisper through their lips, which makes it difficult to discover variety in the sounds. And these sounds, what are they but as the twittering of distant birds and quacking and hissing of geese? There are no emphases, no tones. Just as their language has the sameness of the desert of Gobi, so is their appearance. They all look alike, though differing in height; some being very tall. My present idea of them is ugliness and stiff angular demeanor, perhaps due to ungainly garments. Their eyes have a peculiar look in them; they lie on a straight line, and are green and blue, sometimes brown. Their cheeks are white and hollow, though occasionally purple; their noses like sharp beaks, which we consider unfavorable. Some of them have thick tufts of hair, red and yellow, on their faces, making them look like monkeys. Their arms and ears do not reach to the ground as they are depicted by us. Though sleepy-looking, I think they have intelligence. Their garments are tight-fitting and very uncomfortable in hot weather, as it is now; in the dignity and grace of our flowing drapery they are wanting. This I know, having been advised by my cousin (who did not desire a vagrant crowd gaping into his shop) to adopt their clothing. Though I have difficulty in bending my knees, they seem here to have overcome that, for they lift their feet like prancing Manchu ponies; so different from our smooth gliding over the ground. Truly a wonderful people! They do everything in a manner contrary to us.

Chopsticks are unknown; instead, they

make use of a thin-bladed knife with rounded end and a three-pointed implement like that we use for candied fruit—but larger—which serves to hook their meat and thrust it into the mouth. In the beginning I wondered how they did not wound their lips and tongue with the sharp points. When I used this instrument I was careful not to hurt myself; now I am expert.

These remarkable people, contrary to us, like clothes that imprison them. Their thick coats fit tightly round their arms and bodies, narrow trousers restrict the movements of their knees, tough leather pinches their feet and hats unyielding in shape grip their heads. Their movements, nevertheless, are quick and abrupt; what they would be without the restraint of their garments, I [do] not fancy. Perhaps these cramping clothes are necessary check to their fury, instituted by their sages. They have a great number of slits in their clothes leading into small bags, a most curious device for retaining objects such as coin, a cloth for the nose, a watch, papers, tobacco, pipe, matches and many other things. I counted as many as five in my jacket, four in my little undercoat and three in my trousers, making, in all, twelve! Surely if they put an object in one of them they may have to hunt among all of them to find it. This really happened to the white man that is clerk to my cousin. When he was required to give up his ticket after a long journey with the steam horse, he could find it nowhere; and remained plunging his fingers into all the openings in his clothes many times, in great trouble. After an hour he was compelled to pay again for his journey, which was much loss. Five moons after, in ex-

ploring one of the less used slits—there was the ticket.

The streets are to me an endless subject of admiration and amusement. The center is intended for wheeled traffic and is often crowded with vehicles drawn by horses or by machines like the steam horse, but using oil instead of steam. These machines propel large chariots containing four or six persons; or are fitted to the bicycle, often now seen in the city of Kwangtung and are dangerous because of great speed. All vehicles moved by oil machines are supplied with noisy trumpets to warn people to keep out of the way, for they have no right on the road unless the street-surety waves his hand for them to pass. These trumpets are unluckily of many kinds; whereas they should be all the same when a person would immediately know what the noise was for, and so not be in doubt. Some sounds are like those from a horn; some make harmony so pleasing that a man may stand entranced in the roadway and be crushed, for the owners are proud of their speed.

I went a moon before with my instructor to see the game they call *Foo-poh*.¹ [It] is played in winter heaven for it requires top endurance and activity. Within edge were three ten thousand men and women. They came from what place? Sitting body we look see [watched] the game. It was same as a battle; two groups of men in struggling contention. These young, strong, quick men, what [do they] do? Men [on] one side try to kick goose-egg pattern ball between two poles that represent a gate or entrance. They run like hares, charge each other like bulls, knock down one the other rushing in pursuit of the ball to

1. Football.

send it through the enemy's poles. When ball is kicked good and caught with quickness then voices of the people burst forth like sound of mountain wave dashing against a cliff. Men and women mad with excitement yell and scream at the players.

The demeanor of many youths in this country shows want of respect for their parents and their elders. They stare boldly and openly laugh at them; sit when they stand; not wait to be addressed before speaking; their voices are loud, they interrupt others and lead the conversation. All without rebuke, which they would resent with insolence if parents showed dissatisfaction. We have always been taught that: "Respect for elders is the work of righteousness." I have heard youths contradict fathers and be pleased in showing them in error. I have seen girls reading foolish books while mothers are preparing food or washing clothes. Fathers and mothers frequently complain—sometimes before a magistrate—and say that their children are beyond their control. This is confession that carries with it shame. I [do] not say that all families are devoid of filial piety; but many of them. Our great Sage, Meng, taught that "If each man would love his parents and show due respect to his elders, the whole empire would enjoy tranquillity." And the Prince of Men had already said same before his time: "From the loving example of one family, a whole State becomes loving, and from its courtesies, a whole State becomes courteous."

What is respected in this land is Power, in all forms—Money, Authority, Bodily strength, Skill, Endurance. If you [do] not have one of these you [do] not find much respect or consideration.

The Black Ship Scroll

At dawn on Friday, July 8, 1853, the ships of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's squadron approached the small port of Shimoda about one hundred miles from Tokyo. To the Japanese fishermen who watched in awe as the immense black steamers *Powhatan* and *Mississippi* slipped into their sheltered bay belching dark smoke, these were the Black Ships. With the exception of one Chinese and one Dutch ship allowed to dock in Japan's harbor each year, Perry's ships were the first foreign ships to intrude in Japanese waters for more than two hundred years. The arrival of the American fleet, two steamers and four sailing vessels, was not really a surprise to the Japanese government. The Japanese had watched the British conquest of India and the Westerners' humiliation of China during the Opium War. They had also seen an increasing number of British, Russian, and American ships prowling the coastal waters. The news of the arrival of the Black Ships merely confirmed Japanese fears that their small island empire would be the next to be "opened" by Western force. Japanese reactions to their American visitors have been recorded by an artist who observed the small group of American sailors as they ventured about Shimoda. The following pictures, part of a long hand-scroll painted in the traditional Japanese manner, carry a literal translation of the anonymous artist's comments. The picture on Page 53 carries a caption written by Oliver Statler, the author of *The Black Ship Scroll*.

† Oliver Statler, *The Black Ship Scroll* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc., 1963).

真圖

蒸氣船ホーハッタン

船名ハストムカワ

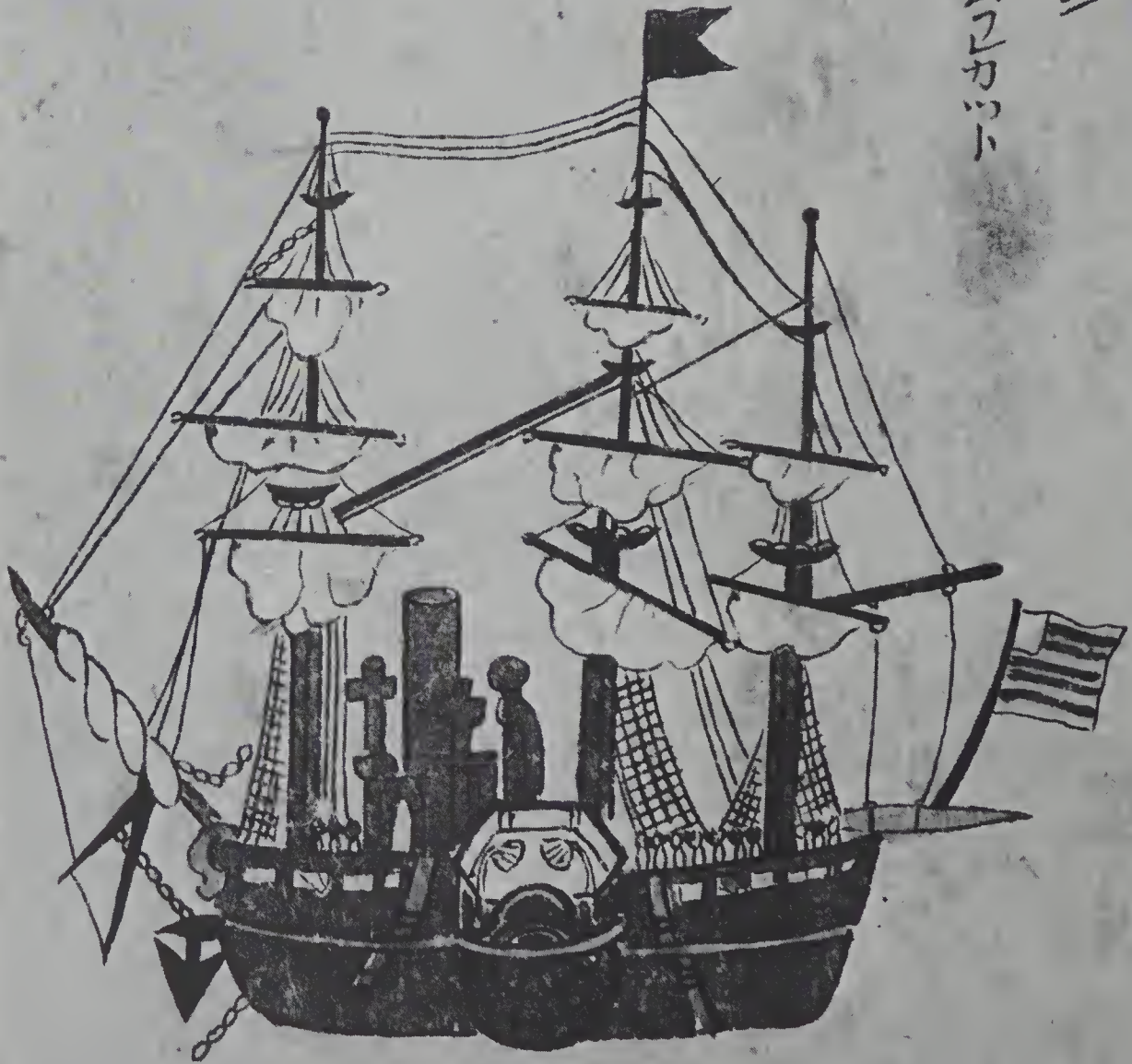
提督比理采船

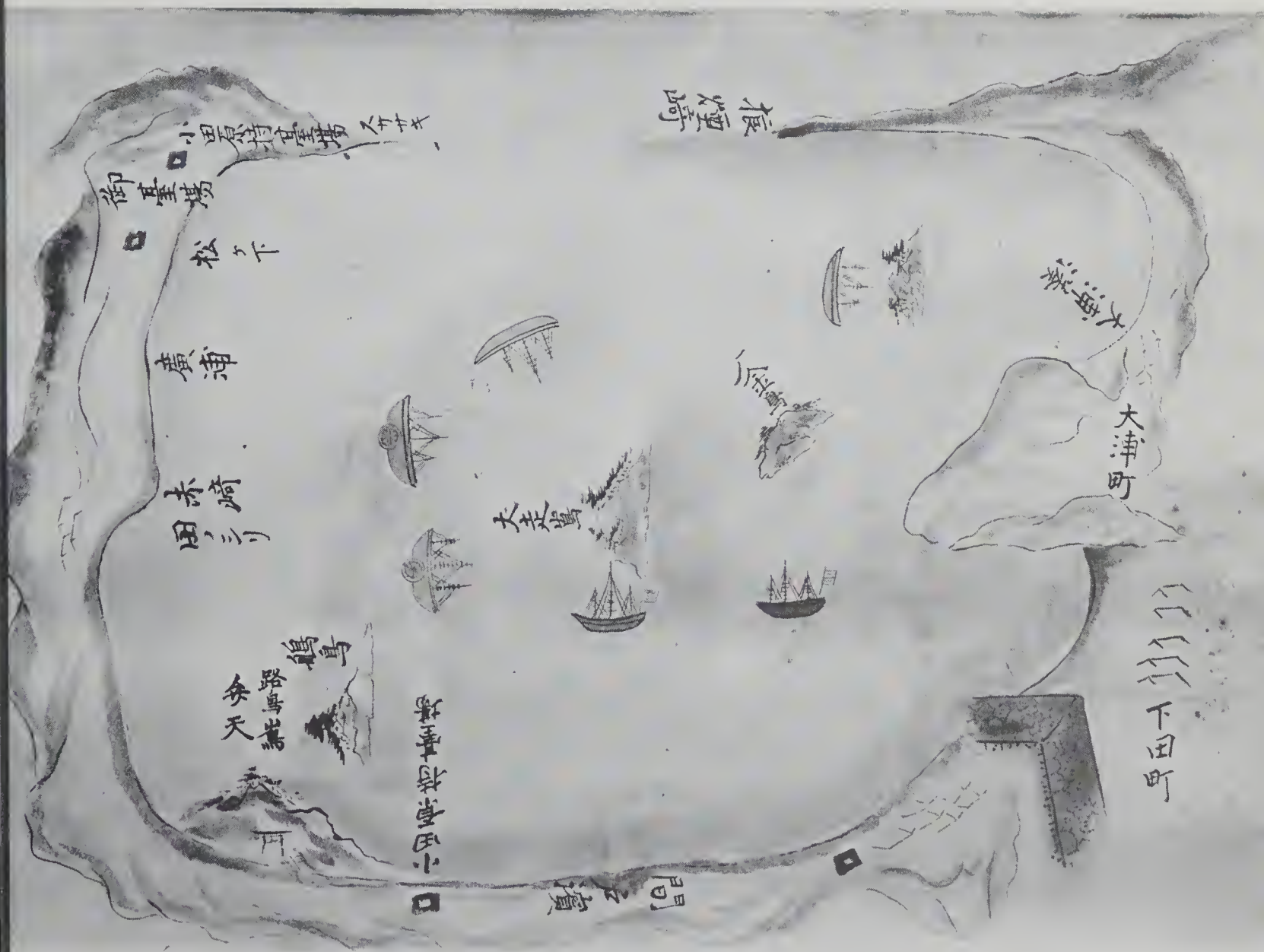
人数三百五十人

中

加二筒廿一發

大筒八發





The scroll's map of Shimoda harbor, the first port in Japan opened to Americans.

A True Picture. Steamship Hohattan [Powhatan]. Such ships are called in English stomu furekatto [steam frigate]. Fleet Commander Hiri [Perry] on board. Crew of 350. 21 medium cannon, 8 large cannon.



A rifleman. Some of the North Americans who landed at Shimoda.

北亞墨利加共化政治列之使節 ペリ之真像

年六十歳餘 面色黄ニシテ 眼目ツリキ 鼻筋通リ
唇朱ヲサシタル如ク 大窓モ 白髪交リテ 輪ノ如ク
クニナレアリ 千金輪ニツカル衣 腋白羅紗
浮袋金ノ織出シアリ



武藏の海さういつる月ハ西遠く

カリホルニアに残る影も

ペリ船中より

海を渡る

右之肖像并文面次小至るは専門の

True Portrait of Perry, Envoy of the Republic of North America. His age is over 60. His face is sallow, eyes slanted, nose prominent. His lips are as though rouged. The hair on his head is partly white, and curly. He wears three rings on his fingers. His uniform is of white serge, with raised crests woven in gold braid.



Pictures of them at Takegahama, surveying distances, and recording in detail data on land and sea.

They shoot flying birds with a "thunder-tube." The number of pellets it emits is very great, and since the sound of its discharge is very like thunder, it is said to be most effective.

ドンドルヤ同ヲ以テ
飛鳥ヲお其玉數ヲ
知ラス音雷如故能
お得ルト云



Toward Self-Strengthening

Among Chinese scholars of the late 1800's were a very few who began to see the adaptation of Western technology to Chinese needs as a possible means of strengthening their country against foreign domination and humiliation. One of these scholars, Feng Kuei-fen, believed that Western science, mathematics, technology, military tactics and weaponry might serve to complement traditional Chinese humanistic and literary interests. Feng, like Honda Toshiaki in Japan, studied subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, geography, agriculture, and philology, subjects totally unknown to all but a few Chinese scholars who were able to obtain books in European languages or in Japanese. The following two extracts from Feng's works, written around 1860, are examples of the kinds of essays that Chinese scholars wrote to encourage their countrymen to reexamine China's traditional governmental, financial, and educational institutions.

On the Adoption of Western Knowledge

The world today is not to be compared with that of the Three Dynasties (of ancient China) . . . Now the globe is ninety-thousand *li* around, and every spot may be reached by ships or wheeled vehicles . . . According to what is listed on the maps by the Westerners, there are not less than one hundred countries. From these one hundred countries, only the books of Italy, at the end of the Ming dynasty, and now those of England have been

translated into Chinese, altogether several tens of books. Those which expound the doctrine of Jesus are generally vulgar, not worth mentioning. Apart from these, Western books on mathematics, mechanics, optics, light, chemistry, and other subjects contain the best principles of the natural sciences. In the books on geography, the mountains, rivers, strategic points, customs, and native products of the hundred countries are fully listed. Most of this information is beyond the reach of our people.

† Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954).

If today we wish to select and use Western knowledge, we should establish official translation offices at Canton and Shanghai. Brilliant students up to fifteen years of age should be selected from those areas to live and study in these schools on double rations. Westerners should be invited to teach them the spoken and written languages of the various nations, and famous Chinese teachers should also be engaged to teach them classics, history, and other subjects. At the same time they should learn mathematics. (Note: All Western knowledge is derived from mathematics. Every Westerner of ten years of age or more studies mathematics. If we now wish to adopt Western knowledge, naturally we cannot but learn mathematics...)

After three years all students who can recite with ease the books of the various nations should be permitted to become licentiates; and if there are some precocious ones who are able to make changes or improvements which can be put into practice, they should be recommended by the superintendent of trade to be imperially granted a *chü-jen*¹ degree as a reward. As we have said before, there are many brilliant people in China; there must be some who can learn from the barbarians and surpass them...

If we let Chinese ethics and famous [Confucian] teachings serve as an original foundation, and let them be supplemented by the methods used by the various nations for the attainment of prosperity and strength, would it not be the best of all procedures?

Moreover, during the last twenty years since the opening of trade, a great many

of the foreign chiefs have learned our written and spoken language, and the best of them can even read our classics and histories. They are generally able to speak on our dynastic regulations and government administration, on our geography and the state of the populace. On the other hand, our officers from generals down, in regard to foreign countries are completely uninformed. In comparison, should we not feel ashamed? No wonder that we understand neither the foreigners nor ourselves, and cannot distinguish fact from unreality. Whether in peace negotiations or in deliberating for war, we can never achieve the essential guiding principles...

If my proposal is carried out, there will necessarily be many Chinese who learn their written and spoken languages; and when there are many such people, there will certainly emerge from among them some upright and honest gentlemen who thoroughly understand the fundamentals of administration, and who would then get hold of the essential guiding principles for the control of foreigners...

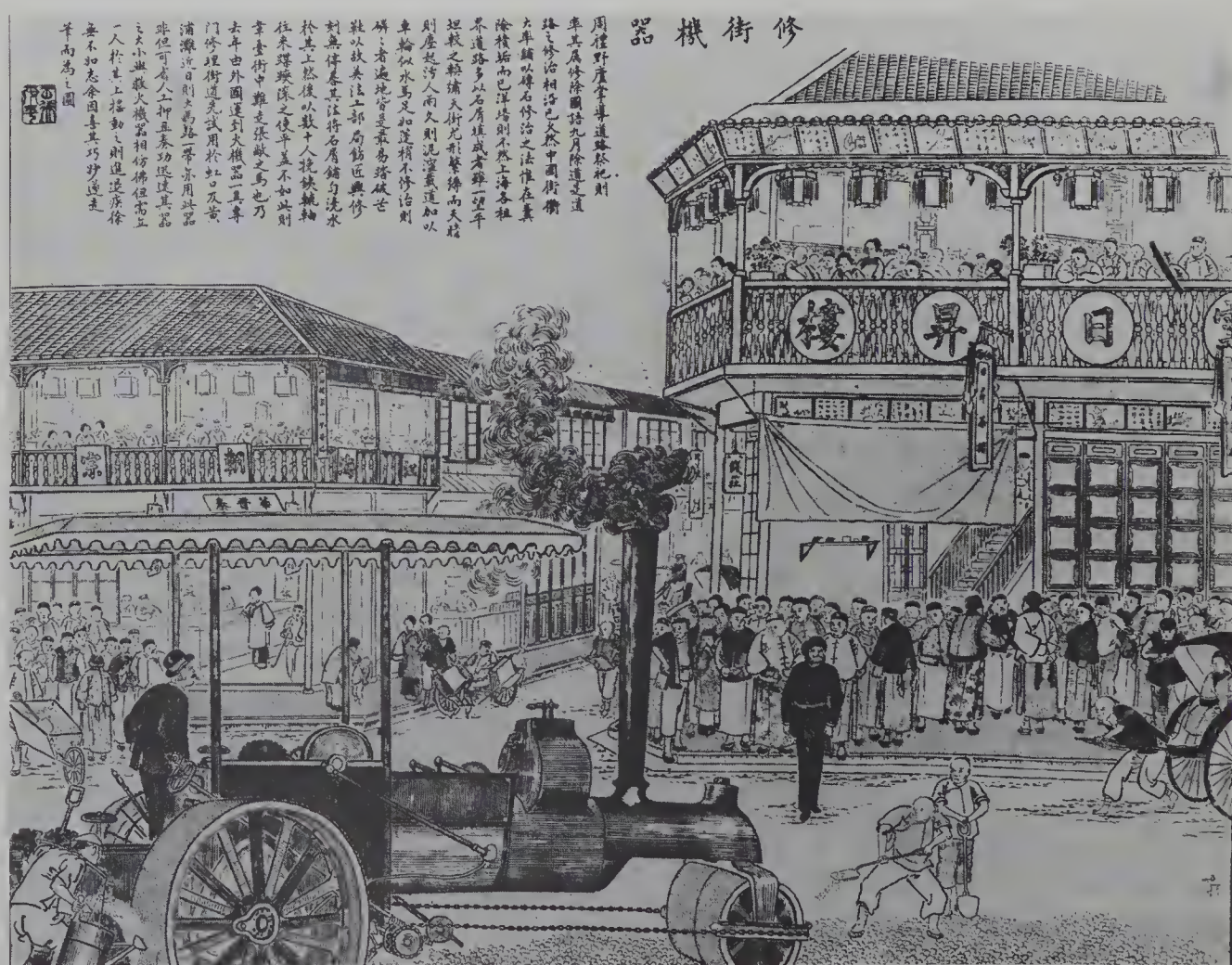
On the Manufacture of Foreign Weapons

The most unparalleled anger which has ever existed since the creation of heaven and earth is exciting all who are conscious in their minds and have spirit in their blood; their hats are raised by their hair standing on end. This is because the largest country on the globe today, with a vast area of 10,000 *li*, is yet controlled by small barbarians... According to a general geography by an Englishman, the territory of our China is eight times larger than that of Russia, ten times that of America, one

1. Diploma equivalent to a master's degree. The holder of this degree is eligible for public office.

hundred times that of France, and two hundred times that of England . . . Yet now we are shamefully humiliated by those four nations in the recent treaties — not because our climate, soil, or resources are inferior to theirs, but because our people are really inferior . . . Why are they small and yet strong? Why are we large and yet weak? We must try to discover some means to become their equal, and that also depends upon human effort. Regarding the present situation there are several major points: in making use of the ability of our manpower, with no one neglected, we are inferior to the barbarians; in securing the benefit of

the soil, with nothing wasted, we are inferior to the barbarians; in maintaining a close relationship between the ruler and the people, with no barrier between them, we are inferior to the barbarians; and in the necessary accord of word with deed, we are also inferior to the barbarians. The way to correct these four points lies with ourselves, for they can be changed at once if only our Emperor would set the general policy right. There is no need for outside help in these matters. [Here Feng goes on to point out that the only help China needs from the West is in modern arms, and claims that in recent contests with Western troops



Chinese woodcut printed in the late 1800's.

the Chinese army has not been inferior in physical qualities, nor even sometimes in morale, but always in arms.]

What we then have to learn from the barbarians is only the one thing, solid ships and effective guns. In my opinion, if we cannot make ourselves strong but merely presume on cunning and deceit, it will be just enough to incur failure. Only one sentence of Wei Yuan is correct: "Learn the strong techniques of the barbarians in order to control them . . ."

Funds should be assigned to establish a shipyard and arsenal in each trading port. Several barbarians should be invited and Chinese who are good in using their minds should be summoned to receive their instructions so that they may in turn teach many artisans. When a piece of work is finished and is indistinguishable from that made by the barbarians, the makers should be given a *chü-jen* degree as a reward, and be permitted to participate in the metropolitan examination on an equal footing with other scholars. Those whose products are superior to the barbarian manufacture should be granted a *chin-shih*² degree as a reward, and be permitted to participate in the palace examinations on the same basis as others. The workers should be double-paid so as to prevent them from quitting.

Our nation has emphasized the civil service examinations, which have preoccupied people's minds for a long time. Wise and intelligent scholars have exhausted their time and energy in such useless things as the eight-legged essays [highly stylized essays for the civil service examination, divided into eight paragraphs], examination papers, and formal

2. Diploma equivalent to a doctorate. This is the highest degree.

calligraphy . . . Now let us order one-half of them to apply themselves to the pursuit of manufacturing weapons and instruments and imitating foreign crafts . . . The intelligence and wisdom of the Chinese are necessarily superior to those of the various barbarians, only formerly we have not made use of them.

Two years ago the Western barbarians suddenly entered the Japanese capital to seek trade relations, which were permitted. Before long the Japanese were able to send some ten steamships of their own over the western ocean to pay return visits to the various countries. They made many requests for treaties which were also granted by these countries, who understood Japan's intentions. Japan is a tiny country and still knows how to exert her energy to become strong. Should we, as a large country, alone accept defilement and insult throughout all time? . . .

Some suggest purchasing ships and hiring foreign people, but the answer is that this is quite impossible. If we can manufacture, can repair, and can use them, then they are our weapons. If we cannot manufacture, nor repair, nor use them, then they are still the weapons of others. When these weapons are in the hands of others and are used for grain transportation, then one day they can make us starve; and if they are used for salt transportation, one day they can deprive us of salt . . . Eventually we must consider manufacturing, repairing, and using weapons by ourselves . . . Only thus will we be able to pacify the empire; only thus can we play a leading role on the globe; and only thus shall we restore our original strength, and redeem ourselves from former humiliations.



In an effort toward modernization, the Chinese built a navy in the 1880's. They were soon defeated in 1894 by the Japanese in a naval battle depicted by this Japanese woodprint.

Conclusions

1. What interested Europeans most about China and Japan some eight hundred years ago? To what extent did the focus of this interest change over the centuries?
2. Contrast Japanese and Chinese reactions to Western intrusion. Which aspects of Western knowledge were most valued by Honda Toshiaki? Which were most valued by Feng Kuei-fen?
3. In what way does our present attitude toward China, and Asia generally, reflect early Western misconceptions of Oriental customs, dress, manners, values, and ways of life?
4. Discuss the suggestions made by Leibniz in his essay *Novissima Sinica*. Do you feel that his ideas might be valid today?
5. Considering European comments on China and Japan, and Chinese and Japanese comments on Europe, what are some of the factors which might cause misunderstandings among nations? Are some of these factors at work today? Explain.

Suggested Readings

Isaacs, Harold R. *Images of Asia: American Views of China and India*, New York: Capricorn Books, 1962.* The analysis of a survey conducted to determine what kinds of mental images Americans retain of China and India and how these impressions are created and eventually frozen into attitudes and preconceptions.

Lach, Donald F. *China in the Eyes of Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.* Details the role of the Jesuit missions and merchant travelers of the 1500's in making Europeans aware of the character of Chinese society.

_____. *Japan in the Eyes of Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.* An illustrated examination of Europe's impressions of Japan in the 1500's, viewed through Jesuit eyes. Letters, reports, and histories.

Levenson, Joseph R., ed. *European Expansion and the Counter-Example of Asia, 1300-1600*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967.* A collection of letters, documents, and essays presenting the principal social, political, technological, and religious factors which caused Europe to expand from a cultural center to a world power while Asia remained separate and withdrawn.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. "Old Bruin," *Commodore Matthew Perry*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967. The story of the American naval officer who headed the Japan Expedition of 1853-1854. Well-illustrated, several chapters dealing with the organizing of the Japan Expedition, Perry's first visit to Japan, contacts with China, and the negotiations which led to the first treaties between the United States and Japan.

Neumann, William L. *America Encounters Japan: From Perry to MacArthur*, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965.* A well-written history of Japanese-American relations emphasizing the ideas, attitudes, and preconceptions shaping American foreign policy towards Japan throughout the 1800's and 1900's.

* Paperbound Edition.



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